ROUSSEAU'S
CONFESSIONS

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THE CONFESSIONS OF ROUSSEAU

A New Edition thoroughly Revised Corrected and Extended by the addition of Passages omitted from Former Editions

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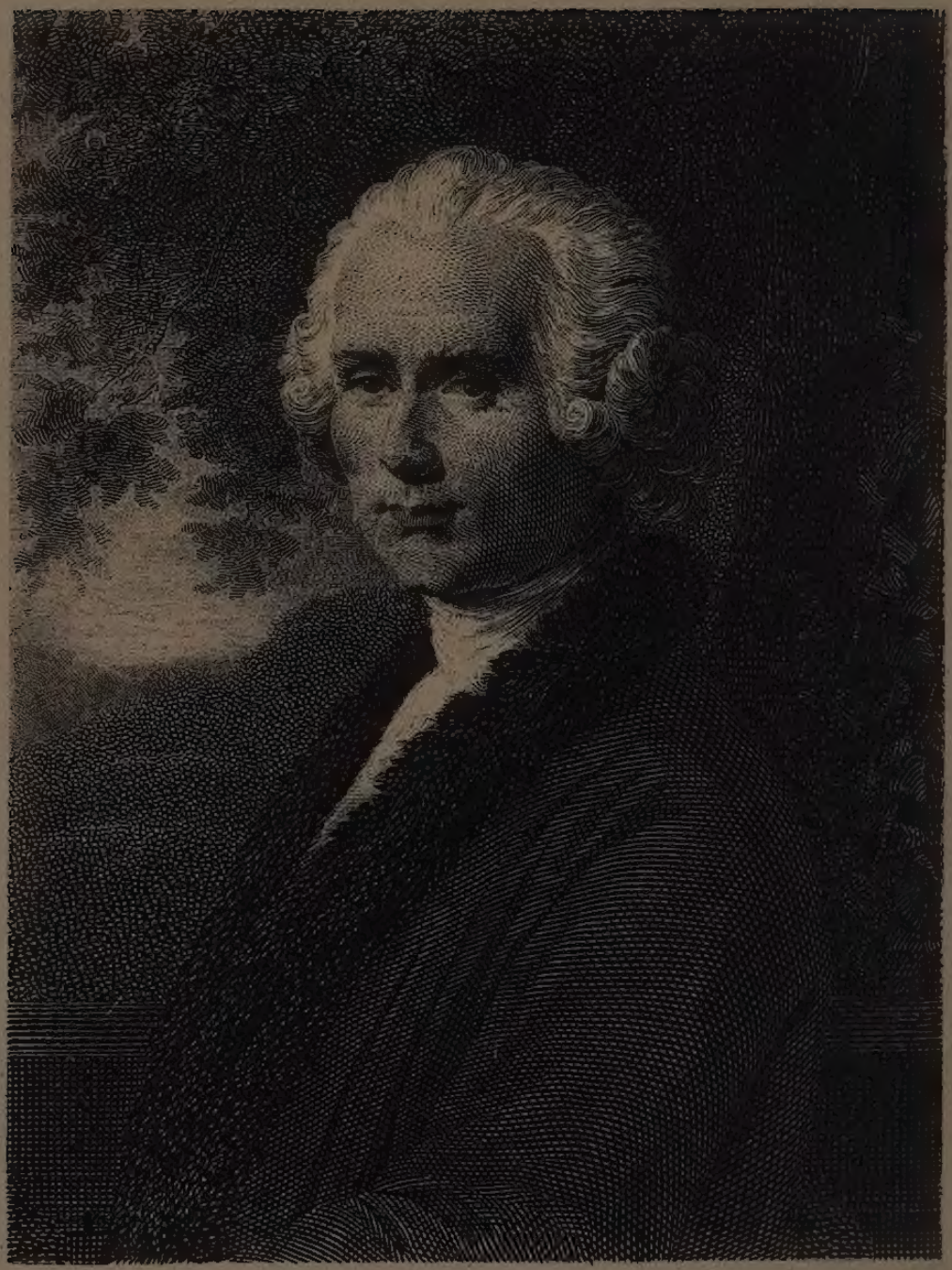
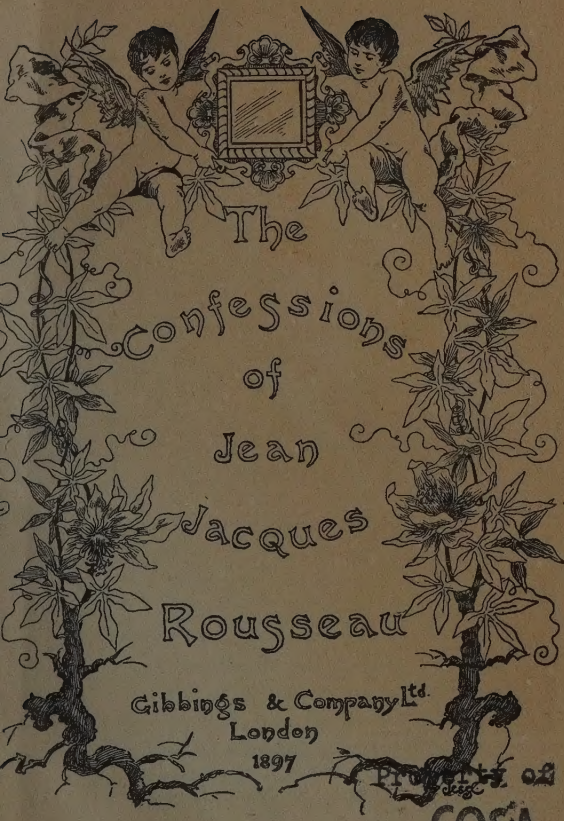
ILLUSTRATIONS AFTER
MAURICE LELOIR

Volume I.—Books I.-IV.

When Emerson asked George Eliot 'What one book do you like best?' she replied, 'Rousseau's Confessions.' 'So do I: there is a point of sympathy between us.'



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.



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1897

INTRODUCTION

AMONG the notable books of later times—we may say, without exaggeration, of all time—must be reckoned *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.* It deals with leading personages and transactions of a momentous epoch, when absolutism and feudalism were rallying for their last struggle against the modern spirit, chiefly represented by Voltaire, the Encyclopedists, and Rousseau himself—a struggle to which, after many fierce intestine quarrels and sanguinary wars throughout Europe and America, has succeeded the prevalence of those more tolerant and rational principles by which the statesmen of our own day are actuated.

On these matters, however, it is not our province to enlarge; nor is it necessary to furnish any detailed account of our author's political, religious, and philosophic axioms and systems, his paradoxes and his errors in logic: these have been so long and so exhaustively disputed over by contending factions that little is left for even the most assiduous gleaner in

the field. The inquirer will find, in Mr. John Morley's excellent work, the opinions of Rousseau reviewed succinctly and impartially. The *Contrat Social*, the *Lettres écrites de la Montagne*, and other treatises that once aroused fierce controversy, may therefore be left in the repose to which they have long been consigned, so far as the mass of mankind is concerned, though they must always form part of the library of the politician and the historian. One prefers to turn to the man Rousseau as he paints himself in the remarkable work before us.

That the task which he undertook in offering to show himself—as Persius puts it—*intus et in cute* to posterity exceeded his powers is a trite criticism; like all human enterprises, his purpose was only imperfectly fulfilled; but this circumstance in no way lessens the attractive qualities of his book, not only for the student of history or psychology, but for the intelligent man of the world. Its startling frankness gives it a peculiar interest wanting in most other autobiographies.

Many censors have elected to sit in judgment on the failings of this strangely constituted being, and some have pronounced upon him very severe sentences. Let it be said once for all that his faults and mistakes were generally due to causes over which he had but little

control, such as a defective education, a too acute sensitiveness, which engendered suspicion of his fellows, irresolution, an overstrained sense of honour and independence, and an obstinate refusal to take advice from those who really wished to befriend him; nor should it be forgotten that he was afflicted during the greater part of his life with an incurable disease.

Lord Byron had a soul near akin to Rousseau's, whose writings naturally made a deep impression on the poet's mind, and probably had an influence on his conduct and modes of thought. In some stanzas of *Childe Harold* this sympathy is expressed with truth and power; especially is the weakness of the Swiss philosopher's character summed up in the following admirable lines:—

'Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they passed
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

. . . . .

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banished; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.

But he was frenzied,—wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was frenzied by disease or woe
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.'

One would rather, however, dwell on the brighter hues of the picture than on its shadows and blemishes; let us not, then, seek to 'draw his frailties from their dread abode.' His greatest fault was his renunciation of a father's duty to his offspring; but this crime he expiated by a long and bitter repentance. We cannot, perhaps, very readily excuse the way in which he has occasionally treated the memory of his mistress and benefactress. That he loved Madame de Warens—his 'Mamma'—deeply and sincerely is undeniable, notwithstanding which he now and then dwells on her improvidence and her feminine indiscretions with an unnecessary and unbecoming lack of delicacy that has an unpleasant effect on the reader, almost seeming to justify the remark of one of his most lenient critics—that, after all, Rousseau had the soul of a lackey. He possessed, however, many amiable and charming qualities, both as a man and a writer, which were evident to those amidst whom he lived, and will be equally so to the unprejudiced reader of the *Confessions*. He had a profound sense of justice and a real desire for the improvement and advancement of the race. Owing to these

excellences he was beloved to the last even by persons whom he tried to repel, looking upon them as members of a band of conspirators, bent upon destroying his domestic peace and depriving him of the means of subsistence.

Those of his writings that are most nearly allied in tone and spirit to the *Confessions* are the *Réveries d'un Promeneur Solitaire* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. His correspondence throws much light on his life and character, as do also parts of *Émile*. It is not easy in our day to realise the effect wrought upon the public mind by the advent of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Julie and Saint-Preux became names to conjure with; their ill-starred amours were everywhere sighed and wept over by the tender-hearted fair; indeed, in composing this work, Rousseau may be said to have done for Switzerland what the author of the Waverley Novels did for Scotland, turning its mountains, lakes, and islands, formerly regarded with aversion, into a fairy-land peopled with creatures whose joys and sorrows appealed irresistibly to every breast. Shortly after its publication began to flow that stream of tourists and travellers which tends to make Switzerland not only more celebrated but more opulent every year. It is one of the few romances written in the epistolary form that do not oppress the reader with a sense of languor and unreality; for its creator poured

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into its pages a tide of passion unknown to his frigid and stilted predecessors, and dared to depict Nature as she really is, not as she was misrepresented by the modish authors and artists of the age. Some persons seem shy of owning an acquaintance with this work; indeed, it has been made the butt of ridicule by the disciples of a decadent school. Its faults and its beauties are on the surface; Rousseau's own estimate is freely expressed at the beginning of the eleventh book of the *Confessions* and elsewhere. It might be wished that the preface had been differently conceived and worded; for the assertion made therein that the book may prove dangerous has caused it to be inscribed on a sort of *index*, and good folk who never read a line of it blush at its name. Its 'sensibility,' too, is a little overdone, and has supplied the wits with opportunities for satire; for example, Canning, in his *New Morality*:—

> 'Sweet Sensibility, who dwells enshrined
> In the fine foldings of the feeling mind . . .
> Sweet child of sickly Fancy!—her of yore
> From her loved France Rousseau to exile bore;
> And while 'midst lakes and mountains wild he ran,
> Full of himself, and shunned the haunts of man,
> Taught her o'er each lone vale and Alpine steep
> To lisp the story of his wrongs and weep.'

As might be imagined, Voltaire had slight sympathy with our social reformer's notions

and ways of promulgating them, and accordingly took up his wonted weapons—sarcasm and ridicule—against poor Jean-Jacques. The quarrels of these two great men cannot be described in this place; but they constitute an important chapter in the literary and social history of the time. In the work with which we are immediately concerned, the author seems to avoid frequent mention of Voltaire, even where we should most expect it. However, the state of his mind when he penned this record of his life should be always remembered in relation to this as well as other occurrences.

Rousseau had intended to bring his autobiography down to a later date, but obvious causes prevented this: hence it is believed that a summary of the chief events that marked his closing years will not be out of place here.

On quitting the Île de Saint-Pierre he travelled to Strasbourg, where he was warmly received, and thence to Paris, arriving in that city on December 16, 1765. The Prince de Conti provided him with a lodging in the Hôtel Saint-Simon, within the precincts of the Temple—a place of sanctuary for those under the ban of authority. Every one was eager to see the illustrious proscript, who complained of being made a daily show, 'like Sancho Panza in his island of Barataria.' During his short stay in the capital there was circulated an ironical letter

purporting to come from the Great Frederick, but really written by Horace Walpole. This cruel, clumsy, and ill-timed joke angered Rousseau, who ascribed it to Voltaire. A few sentences may be quoted :—

'My dear Jean-Jacques,—You have renounced Geneva, your native place. You have caused your expulsion from Switzerland, a country so extolled in your writings; France has issued a warrant against you: so do you come to me. . . . My states offer you a peaceful retreat. I wish you well, and will treat you well, if you will let me. But, if you persist in refusing my help, do not reckon upon my telling any one that you did so. If you are bent on tormenting your spirit to find new misfortunes, choose whatever you like best. I am a king, and can procure them for you at your pleasure; and, what will certainly never happen to you in respect of your enemies, I will cease to persecute you as soon as you cease to take a pride in being persecuted.—Your good friend,

'Frederick.'

Early in 1766 David Hume persuaded Rousseau to go with him to England, where the exile could find a secure shelter. In London his appearance excited general attention. Edmund Burke had an interview with him, and held that inordinate vanity was the leading trait in his character. Mr. Davenport, to whom he was introduced by Hume, generously offered Rousseau a home at Wootton, in Staffordshire, near the Peak Country; the latter, however, would only accept the offer on

condition that he should pay a rent of £30 a year. He was accorded a pension of £100 by George III., but declined to draw after the first annual payment. The climate and scenery of Wootton being similar to those of his native country, he was at first delighted with his new abode, where he lived with Thérèse, and devoted his time to herborising and inditing the first six books of his *Confessions*. Soon, however, his old hallucinations acquired strength, and Rousseau convinced himself that enemies were bent upon his capture, if not his death. In June 1766 he wrote a violent letter to Hume, calling him 'one of the worst of men.' Literary Paris had combined with Hume and the English Government to surround him—as he supposed—with guards and spies; he revolved in his troubled mind all the reports and rumours he had heard for months and years; Walpole's forged letter rankled in his bosom; and in the spring of 1767 he fled, first to Spalding, in Lincolnshire, and subsequently to Calais, where he landed in May.

On his arrival in France his restless and wandering disposition forced him continually to change his residence, and acquired for him the title of 'voyageur perpétuel.' While at Trye, in Gisors, in 1767-8, he wrote the second part of the *Confessions*. He had assumed the surname of Renou, and about this time he

declared before two witnesses that Thérèse was his wife—a proceeding to which he attached the sanctity of marriage. In 1770 he took up his abode in Paris, where he lived continuously for seven years, in a street which now bears his name, and gained a living by copying music. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the author of *Paul and Virginia*, who became acquainted with him in 1772, has left some interesting particulars of Rousseau's daily mode of life at this period. Monsieur de Girardin having offered him an asylum at Ermenonville in the spring of 1778, he and Thérèse went thither to reside, but for no long time. On the 3rd of July in the same year this perturbed spirit at last found rest, stricken by apoplexy. A rumour that he had committed suicide was circulated, but the evidence of trustworthy witnesses, including a physician, effectually contradicts this accusation. His remains, first interred in the Île des Peupliers, were after the Revolution removed to the Panthéon. In later times the Government of Geneva made some reparation for their harsh treatment of a famous citizen, and erected his statue, modelled by his compatriot Pradier, on an island in the Rhône.

'See nations, slowly wise and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.'

The text of this version of the *Confessions* is founded on that published anonymously in 1790-96, which is, in the main, a fair rendering, as its long popularity attests. It has been the aim of the present editor to amend certain mistranslations and misprints, and to supply, by careful collation with the original, those passages which the translator omitted, either from a desire to abridge, or because they show the author's conduct in an unfavourable light. In addition to Rousseau's own notes, distinguished by the letter 'R,' many others have been furnished: these are drawn from the best authorities—Musset-Pathay, Petitain, Ducros, and others. Proper names are correctly given, the reasons for representing many of these by initials or blanks having long ceased to exist.

The illustrations are from the designs made for the splendid quarto edition of Paris, 1889, by Maurice Leloir, who has very happily caught the tone of the period in costume and manners.

S. W. ORSON.

November 1896.

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THE CONFESSIONS OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

PART I—BOOK I

[1712-1719]

I HAVE entered on a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.

I alone. I know my heart, and have studied mankind; I am not made like any one I have been acquainted with, perhaps like no one in existence; if not better, I at least claim originality, and whether Nature did wisely in breaking the mould in which she formed me can only be determined after having read this work.

Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the Sovereign Judge with this book in my hand, and say aloud, Thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. With equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked; I have

concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced superfluous ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory. I may have supposed that certain which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted as truth a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes vile and despicable, at others virtuous, generous, and sublime—even as Thou hast read my inmost soul, Power eternal! Assemble round Thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them grieve at my indignities, let them blush at my miseries; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity at the foot of Thy throne the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, 'I was better than that man.'

I was born in Geneva, in 1712, son of Isaac Rousseau and Susanne Bernard, citizens. My father's share of a moderate competency, which was divided among fifteen children, being very trivial, his business of a watchmaker (in which he was indeed very expert) was his only dependence. My mother's circumstances were more affluent; she was the daughter of a Monsieur Bernard, minister, and possessed both modesty and beauty; indeed, my father found some difficulty in obtaining her hand.

The affection they entertained for each other was almost as early as their existence; at eight or nine years old they walked together every evening on the banks of the Treille, and before they were ten could not support the idea of separation. A natural sympathy of soul con-

firmed those sentiments which habit at first produced. Born with minds susceptible of exquisite sensibility and tenderness, each only awaited the encounter of a kindred disposition; —rather, perhaps, should I say, the happy moment awaited them, when each surrendered a willing heart. The obstacles that opposed served only to give a degree of vivacity to their affection; and the young lover, not being able to obtain his mistress, was overwhelmed with sorrow. She advised him to travel that he might forget her. He consented; he travelled, but returned more passionate than ever, and found her equally constant, equally tender. After this proof of mutual affection, what could they resolve?—to dedicate their future lives to love! the resolution was ratified with a vow, on which Heaven shed its benediction.

My mother's brother, Gabriel Bernard, fell in love with one of my father's sisters: she had no objection to the match, but made the marriage of his sister with her brother an indispensable preliminary. Love soon removed every obstacle, and the two weddings were celebrated on the same day: thus my uncle became the husband of my aunt, and their children were doubly my cousins-german. Before a year was expired both had the happiness to become fathers, but were soon afterwards obliged to submit to a separation.

My uncle Bernard, who was an engineer, went to serve in the Empire and Hungary under Prince Eugene, and distinguished himself both at the siege and battle of Belgrade. My father,

after the birth of my only brother, set off, on recommendation, for Constantinople, and was appointed watchmaker to the Seraglio. During his absence, the beauty, wit, and accomplishments[1] of my mother attracted a number of admirers, among whom Monsieur de La Closure, Resident of France, was the most assiduous in his attentions. His passion must have been extremely violent, since after a period of thirty years I have seen him affected whenever we spoke of her. My mother had a defence more powerful even than her virtue: she tenderly loved my father, and conjured him to return; he sacrificed all, and did so. I was the unfortunate fruit of this return, being born ten months after, in a very weakly and infirm state; my birth cost my mother her life, and was the first of my misfortunes.

I am ignorant how my father supported her loss at that time, but I know he was ever after inconsolable. In me he still thought he saw her, but could never forget I had been the innocent cause of his misfortune; nor did he

[1] They were too brilliant for her situation, the minister, her father, who loved her dearly, having bestowed great pains on her education. She was taught drawing, singing, and to play on the theorbo; had learning, and wrote agreeable verses. The following is an extempore piece which she composed in the absence of her brother and husband, in a conversation with some person concerning them, while walking with her sister-in-law and their two children:

'Ces deux messieurs qui sont absents
Nous sont chers de bien des manières;
Ce sont nos amis, nos amants,
Ce sont nos maris et nos frères,
Et les pères de ces enfants.'—R.

ever embrace me but his sighs, the convulsive pressure of his arms, witnessed that a bitter regret mingled with his caresses, though, as may be supposed, they were not on this account less tender. When he said to me, 'Jean-Jacques, let us talk of your mother,' my usual reply was, 'Yes, father, but then you know we shall cry,' and immediately the tears started from his eyes. 'Ah!' exclaimed he, with agitation, 'give her back to me; at least console me for her loss; fill up the void she has left in my soul. Could I love thee thus wert thou only *my* son?' Forty years after this loss he expired in the arms of a second wife, but the name of the first still vibrated on his lips—still was her image engraven on his heart.

Such were the authors of my being: of all the gifts it had pleased Heaven to bestow on them, a feeling heart was the only one that descended to me; this had been the source of their felicity—it was the foundation of all my misfortunes.

I came into the world with so few signs of life that they entertained but little hope of preserving me. I brought with me the seeds of a disorder that has gathered strength with years, and from which I am now relieved at intervals, only to suffer a different, though more intolerable, evil. I owed my preservation to one of my father's sisters, an amiable and virtuous girl, who took the most tender care of me; she is yet living, nursing, at the age of fourscore, a husband younger than herself, but worn out with excessive drinking. Dear aunt!

I freely forgive your having preserved my life, and lament that it is not in my power to bestow on the decline of your days the tender solicitude and care you lavished on the first dawn of mine.[1] My nurse, Jaqueline, is likewise living, and in good health—the hands that opened my eyes to the light of this world may close them at my death.

I suffered before I thought; it is the common lot of humanity. I experienced more than my proportion of it. I have no knowledge of what passed prior to my fifth or sixth year. I recollect nothing of learning to read; I only remember what effect the first considerable exercise of it produced on my mind; from that moment I date an uninterrupted knowledge of myself. Every night, after supper, my father and I read some part of a collection of romances which had been my mother's. My father's design was only to improve me in reading, and he thought these entertaining works were calculated to give me a fondness for it; but we soon found ourselves so interested in the adventures they contained, that we alternately read whole nights together, and could not bear to give over until at the conclusion of a volume. Sometimes, in a morning, on hearing the swallows at our window, my father, quite ashamed of this weakness, would cry, 'Come, let us go to bed; I am more a child than thou art.'

[1] Her name was Madame Gonceru. In March 1767 Rousseau conferred on her a pension of 100 livres, and, even when sorely distressed himself, paid it regularly.

I soon acquired, by this dangerous custom, not only an extreme facility in reading and comprehending, but, for my age, a too intimate acquaintance with the passions. An infinity of sensations were familiar to me, without possessing any precise idea of the objects to which they related—I had conceived nothing—I had felt the whole. This confused succession of emotions which crowded upon my mind did not retard the future efforts of my reason, though they added an extravagant, romantic notion of human life, which experience and reflection have never been able wholly to eradicate.

[1719-1723.] My romance-reading concluded with the summer of 1719; the following winter was differently employed. My mother's library being exhausted, we had recourse to that part of her father's which had devolved to us; here we happily found some valuable books, nor could this be otherwise, having been selected by a minister who truly deserved that title, in whom learning (which was the fashion of the times) was but a secondary commendation, his taste and good sense being most conspicuous. The *History of the Church and Empire* by Le Sueur, Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*, Plutarch's *Lives*, *The History of Venice* by Nani, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, La Bruyère, Fontenelle's *Worlds*, his *Dialogues of the Dead*, and a few volumes of Molière, were soon ranged in my father's closet, where, during the hours he was employed in his business, I daily read them,

with an avidity and taste uncommon, perhaps unprecedented, at my age. Plutarch above all became my greatest favourite. The satisfaction I derived from the repeated reading of this author extinguished my passion for romances, and I shortly preferred Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides, to Orondates, Artamenes, and Juba. These interesting studies, seconded by the conversations they frequently occasioned with my father, produced that republican spirit and love of liberty, that haughty and invincible turn of mind, which rendered me impatient of restraint or servitude, and became the torment of my life, as I continually found myself in situations incompatible with these sentiments. Incessantly occupied with Rome and Athens, conversing, if I may so express myself, with their illustrious heroes; born the citizen of a republic, of a father whose ruling passion was the love of his country, I was fired with these examples; could fancy myself a Greek or Roman, and readily enter into the character of the personage whose life I read; transported by the recital of any extraordinary instance of fortitude or intrepidity, animation flashed from my eyes, and gave my voice additional strength and energy. One day, at table, while relating the episode of Scævola, they were terrified at seeing me start from my seat and hold my hand over a hot chafing-dish, to represent more forcibly the action.

My brother, who was seven years older than myself, was brought up to my father's profession. The extraordinary affection they lavished on

me caused him to be somewhat neglected: this certainly was a fault which cannot be justified. His education and morals suffered by this neglect, and he acquired the habits of a libertine before he arrived at an age to be really one. He was placed under another master, but his escapades were as numerous as when he lived at home. Though I saw him so seldom that it could hardly be said we were acquainted, I loved him tenderly, and believe he had as strong an affection for me as a scapegrace is capable of. One day, I remember, when my father was correcting him severely, I threw myself between them, embracing my brother, whom I covered with my body, receiving the strokes designed for him. I persisted so obstinately in my protection, that, either softened by my cries and tears, or fearing to hurt me most, his anger subsided, and he pardoned his fault. In the end, my brother's conduct became so bad that he suddenly disappeared, and we learned some time after that he was in Germany; but he never wrote to us, and from that day we heard no news of him: thus I became an only son.

If this poor lad was ill reared, it was quite different with his brother, for the children of a king could not be treated with more attention and tenderness than were bestowed on my infancy, being the darling of the family, and, what is rather uncommon, though treated as a beloved, never a spoiled child; was never permitted, while under the paternal roof, to play in the street with other children; never had any occasion to contradict or indulge those fantastical

humours which are usually attributed to nature, but are in reality the effects of education. I had the faults common to my age; was talkative, a glutton, and sometimes a liar; made no scruple of stealing sweetmeats, fruits, or, indeed, any kind of eatables; but never took delight in ill-doing, in mischievous waste, in accusing others, or tormenting harmless animals. I recollect, indeed, that one day, while Madame Clot, a neighbour of ours, was gone to church, I made water in her kettle; the remembrance even now makes me smile, for Madame Clot (though, if you please, a good sort of creature) was one of the most grumbling old women I ever knew. Thus have I given a brief but faithful history of my childish transgressions.

How could I become cruel or vicious, when I had before my eyes only examples of mildness, and was surrounded by some of the best people in the world? My father, my aunt, my nurse, my relations, our friends, our neighbours, all I had any connection with, did not obey me, it is true, but loved me tenderly, and I returned their affection. I found so little to excite my desires, and those I had were so seldom contradicted, that I was hardly sensible of possessing any, and can solemnly aver I was an absolute stranger to caprice until after I had experienced the authority of a master. Those hours that were not employed in reading or writing with my father, or walking with my governess, I spent with my aunt; and whether seeing her embroider or hearing her sing, whether sitting or standing by her side, I was ever happy.

Her tenderness and unaffected gaiety, the charms of her countenance, have left such indelible impressions on my mind, that her manner, look, and attitude are still before my eyes; I recollect her little caressing questions; could describe her clothes, her head-dress, nor have the two curls of black hair which hung on her temples, according to the mode of that time, escaped my memory.

Though my taste, or rather passion, for music did not show itself until a considerable time after, I am fully persuaded it is to her I am indebted for it. She knew a great number of songs, which she sang with great sweetness and melody. The serenity and cheerfulness which were conspicuous in this lovely girl banished melancholy, and made all around her happy. The charms of her voice had such an effect on me that not only several of her songs have ever since remained on my memory, but, now when I have lost it, some I have not thought of from my infancy, as I grow old return upon my mind with a charm altogether inexpressible. Would any one believe that an old dotard like me, worn out with care and infirmity, should sometimes surprise himself weeping like a child, and in a voice querulous and broken by age, muttering out one of those airs which were the favourites of my infancy? There is one song in particular, whose tune I perfectly recollect, but the words that compose the latter half of it constantly refuse every effort to recall them, though I have a confused idea of the rhymes. The beginning, with what

I have been able to recollect of the remainder, is as follows :—

Tircis, je n'ose
Écouter ton chalumeau
Sous l'ormeau ;
Car on en cause
Déjà dans notre hameau.
. . . . . .
. . . . un berger
. . . . s'engager
. . . . sans danger,
Et toujours l'épine est sous la rose.[1]

I have endeavoured to account for the invincible charm my heart feels on the recollection of this fragment, but it is altogether inexplicable; I only know that before I get to the end of it I always find my voice interrupted by tenderness, and my eyes suffused with tears. I have a hundred times formed the resolution of writing to Paris for the remainder of these words, if any one should chance to know them; but I am almost certain the pleasure I take in the recollection would be greatly diminished were I assured any one but my poor aunt Suson had sung them.

Such were my affections on entering this life.

[1] This song is still popular amongst the working class in Paris :

'Tircis, je n'ose
Écouter ton chalumeau
Sous l'ormeau ;
Car on en cause
Déjà dans notre hameau.
Un cœur s'expose
A trop s'engager
Avec un berger,
Et toujours l'épine est sous la rose.'

Thus began to form and demonstrate itself a heart at once haughty and tender, a character effeminate, yet invincible; which, fluctuating between weakness and courage, ease and virtue, has ever set me in contradiction to myself, causing abstinence and enjoyment, pleasure and prudence, equally to shun me.

This course of education was interrupted by an accident whose consequences influenced the rest of my life. My father had a quarrel with Monsieur Gautier, who had a captain's commission in France, and was related to several of the Council. This Gautier, who was an insolent, ill-bred man, happening to bleed at the nose, in order to be revenged accused my father of having drawn his sword on him in the city, and in consequence of this charge they were about to conduct my father to prison. He insisted (according to the law of the republic) that the accuser should be confined at the same time; and, not being able to obtain this, preferred to quit Geneva and undergo a voluntary banishment for the remainder of his life, to giving up a point by which he must sacrifice his honour and liberty.

I remained under the tuition of my uncle Bernard, who was at that time employed in the fortifications of Geneva. He had lost his eldest daughter, but had a son about my own age, and we were sent together to Bossey, to board with the Minister Lambercier. Here we were to learn Latin, with all the insignificant trash that has obtained the name of education.

Two years spent in this village softened, in

some degree, my Roman fierceness, and again reduced me to a state of childhood. At Geneva, where nothing was exacted, I loved study and reading, almost, indeed, my sole amusement; but at Bossey, where application was expected, I was fond of play as a relaxation. The country was so new, so charming in my idea, that it seemed impossible to find satiety in its enjoyment, and I conceived a passion for rural life which time has not been able to extinguish; nor have I ever ceased to regret the pure and tranquil pleasures I enjoyed at this place in my childhood, the remembrance having followed me through every age, even to that in which I am hastening again towards it. Monsieur Lambercier was a worthy, sensible man, who, without neglecting our instruction, never made our tasks burthensome. What convinces me of the rectitude of his method is, that notwithstanding my extreme aversion to restraint, the recollection of my studies is never attended with disgust; and, if my improvement under him was trivial, it was obtained with ease, and has never escaped memory.

The simplicity of this rural life was of infinite advantage in opening my heart to the reception of true friendship. The sentiments I had hitherto formed on this subject were extremely elevated, but altogether imaginary. The habit of living in this peaceful manner united me tenderly to my cousin Bernard; my affection was more ardent than that I had felt for my brother, nor has time ever been able to efface it. He was a tall, lank, weakly boy, with a mind as

soft as his body was feeble, and who did not wrong the good opinion they were disposed to entertain for the son of my guardian. Our studies, amusements, and tastes were the same; we were alone, of equal age, and each wanted a playmate; to separate would, in some measure, have been to annihilate us. Though we had not many opportunities of demonstrating our attachment to each other, it was certainly extreme; and so far from enduring the thought of separation, we could not even form an idea that we should ever be able to submit to it. Each of a disposition to be won by kindness, and complaisant when not soured by contradiction, we agreed in every particular. If, by the favour of those who governed us, he had the ascendant while in their presence, I was sure to acquire it when we were alone, and this preserved the equilibrium. If he hesitated in repeating his task, I prompted him; when my exercise was finished, I helped to write his; and, in our amusements, my disposition being most active, served him as a guide. In a word, our characters accorded so well, and the friendship that subsisted between us was so cordial, that during the five years we were at Bossey and Geneva we were inseparable: we often fought, it is true, but there never was any occasion to separate us. No one of our quarrels lasted more than a quarter of an hour, and never in our lives did we make any complaint of each other. It may be said, these remarks are frivolous; but, perhaps, a similar example among children can hardly be produced.

The manner in which I passed my time at Bossey was so agreeable to my disposition that it only required a longer duration absolutely to have fixed my character, which would have had only peaceable, affectionate, benevolent sentiments for its basis. I believe no individual of our kind ever possessed less natural vanity than myself. At intervals, by an extraordinary effort, I arrived at sublime ideas, but presently sank again into my original languor. To be beloved by every one who knew me was my most ardent wish. I was naturally mild, my cousin was equally so, and those who had the care of us were of similar dispositions. Everything contributed to strengthen those propensities which nature had implanted in my breast, and during the two years I was neither the witness nor victim of any violent emotions. I knew nothing so delightful as to see every one content, not only with me, but all that concerned them. I remember that when repeating our catechism at church, nothing could give me greater vexation, on being obliged to hesitate, than to see Mademoiselle Lambercier's looks express disapprobation and uneasiness. This alone was more afflicting to me than the shame of faltering before so many witnesses, which, notwithstanding, was sufficiently painful; for, though not over-solicitous of praise, I was feelingly alive to shame; yet I can truly affirm, the dread of being reprimanded by Mademoiselle Lambercier alarmed me less than the thought of making her uneasy.

Neither she nor her brother was deficient in

a reasonable severity, but as this severity, almost always just, was never passionate, I grieved, but never rebelled against it; I was more afflicted at their disapprobation than the punishment. Certainly the method of treating youth would be altered if the distant effects this indiscriminate and frequently indiscreet method produces were more conspicuous. I would willingly excuse myself from a further explanation, did not the lesson this example conveys (which points out an evil as frequent as it is pernicious) forbid my silence.

As Mademoiselle Lambercier felt a mother's affection, she sometimes exerted a mother's authority, even to inflicting on us, when we deserved it, the punishment of infants. She had often threatened it, and this threat of a treatment entirely new appeared to me extremely dreadful; but I found the reality much less terrible than the idea, and, what is still more unaccountable, this punishment increased my affection for the person who had inflicted it. All this affection, aided by my natural mildness, was scarcely sufficient to prevent my seeking, by fresh offences, a return of the same chastisement; for a degree of sensuality had mingled with the smart and shame, which left more desire than fear of a repetition. It is true that, as a precocious sexual instinct influenced me in this, similar chastisement from her brother's hand would have been the reverse of pleasing; but from a man of his disposition this was not probable, and if I abstained from meriting correction, it was merely from a fear of offending

Mademoiselle Lambercier; for benevolence, even when prompted by the passions, has ever maintained an empire over me which has given law to my heart.

This relapse, which, though desirable, I had not endeavoured to accelerate, arrived without my fault—I should say, without my seeking,—and I profited by it with a safe conscience; but this second was also the last time, for Mademoiselle Lambercier, who doubtless had some reason to imagine this chastisement did not produce the desired effect, declared it was too fatiguing, and that she renounced it for the future. Till now we had slept in her chamber, and, during the winter, even in her bed; but two days after another room was prepared for us, and from that moment I had the honour (which I could very well have dispensed with) of being treated by her as a great boy.

Who would believe this childish discipline, received at eight years old, from the hand of a woman of thirty, should influence my propensities, my desires, my passions, my very self, for the rest of my life, and that in quite a contrary sense from what might naturally have been expected? The very incident that inflamed my senses gave my desires such an extraordinary turn, that, confined to what I had already experienced, I sought no farther, and, with blood boiling with sensuality almost from my birth, preserved my purity beyond the age when the coldest and tardiest constitutions lose their insensibility. Long tormented, without knowing by what, I gazed on every handsome

woman with ardour; imagination incessantly brought their charms to my remembrance, only to transform them into so many demoiselles Lambercier.

Even after I had attained to manhood, this strange fancy, always persistent, and carried to the length of depravity, even of madness, preserved in me a morality which seems its very opposite. If ever education was perfectly chaste, it was certainly that I received; my three aunts were not only of exemplary prudence, but maintained a degree of modest reserve which women have long since thought unnecessary. My father, it is true, loved pleasure; but his gallantry was that of the old school, and he never expressed his affection for any woman he regarded in terms a virgin could have blushed at; indeed, it was impossible more attention should be paid to that regard we owe the morals of children than was uniformly observed by every one I had any concern with. An equal degree of reserve in this particular was observed at Monsieur Lambercier's, where a good maid-servant was discharged for having once made use of a rather broad expression before us. I had no precise idea before the age of adolescence of the ultimate effect of the passions, but the dim conception I had formed was extremely disgusting; I entertained a particular horror of courtesans, which time has not effaced, nor could I look on a rake without a degree of disdain mingled with terror. My aversion for debauchery dates from a day when I went to the Petit Sacconex along a hollow road, on each

side of which were caves, to which, I was told, such folk resorted. What I had seen of dogs always rose up in my mind at the remembrance of this, and filled me with deep disgust.

These prejudices of education, proper in themselves to retard the first explosions of a combustible constitution, were strengthened, as I have already hinted, by the effect the first hints of sensuality produced in me; for, notwithstanding the troublesome ebullition of my blood, I was satisfied with the species of voluptuousness I had already been acquainted with, never turning toward that which had been rendered hateful to me, and yet was so allied to the other without my knowledge. In my foolish fancies, in my erotic imaginings, in the extravagances into which I was often borne, I borrowed, so to speak, the aid of the opposite sex, quite ignorant of the manner in which nature bids us regard it.

Thus I passed the age of puberty, with a constitution extremely ardent, without knowing, or even wishing for, any other gratification of the passions than what Mademoiselle Lambercier had innocently given me the idea of; and when I became a man, what might have ruined me saved me, for that childish taste, instead of vanishing, only associated with the other. This folly, joined to a natural timidity, has always prevented my being very enterprising with women, so that I have passed my days in languishing in silence for those persons whom I most admired. Never daring openly to confess the bent of my mind in this respect,

I yet indulged myself with some correlative actions. To fall at the feet of an imperious mistress, obey her mandates, or implore pardon, were for me exquisite enjoyments; and the more my blood was inflamed by the efforts of a lively imagination, the more I acquired the appearance of a whining lover. It will be readily conceived that this mode of making love is not attended with a rapid progress or imminent danger to the virtue of its object; yet, though I have a few favours to boast of, I have not been excluded from enjoyment, however imaginary. Thus the senses, in concurrence with a mind equally timid and romantic, have preserved my morals chaste, and feelings uncorrupted, with precisely the same inclinations which, seconded with a moderate portion of effrontery, might have plunged me into the most unwarrantable excesses.

I have made the first, most difficult, step in the obscure and painful maze of my Confessions. We never feel so great a degree of repugnance in divulging what is really criminal as what is merely ridiculous. I am now assured of my resolution, for after what I have dared to disclose, nothing can have power to deter me. The difficulty attending these acknowledgments will be readily conceived, when I declare, that during the whole of my life, though frequently labouring under the most violent agitation, being hurried away with the impetuosity of a passion which, when in company with those I loved, deprived me of the faculty of sight and hearing, my senses distracted, my whole frame convulsed,

I could never, in the whole course of the most unbounded familiarity, acquire sufficient resolution to declare my folly, and implore the only favour that remained to bestow. It was bestowed once, however, in childhood, and by a child of my own age, yet it was she who first proposed it.

In thus investigating the first traces of my sensible existence, I find elements which, though seemingly incompatible, have united to produce a simple and uniform effect; while others, apparently the same, have, by the concurrence of certain circumstances, formed such different combinations, that it would never be imagined they had any affinity. Who would believe, for example, that one of the most vigorous springs of my soul was tempered in the identical source from whence luxury and ease mingled with my constitution and circulated in my veins? Before I quit this subject, I will add a striking instance of the different effects they produced.

One day, while I was studying in a chamber contiguous to the kitchen, the maid set some of Mademoiselle Lambercier's combs to dry by the fire, and, on coming to fetch them some time after, was surprised to find the teeth of one of them broken off. Who could be suspected of this mischief? No one but myself had entered the room. I was questioned, but denied having any knowledge of it. Monsieur and Mademoiselle Lambercier consult, exhort, threaten, but all to no purpose; I obstinately persist in the denial; and though this was the first time I had been detected in a confirmed

falsehood, appearances were so strong that they overthrew all my protestations. This affair was thought serious; the mischief, the lie, the obstinacy, were considered equally deserving of punishment, which was not now to be administered by Mademoiselle Lambercier. My uncle Bernard was written to; he arrived; and my poor cousin being charged with a crime no less serious, we were conducted to the same execution, which was inflicted with great severity. If, finding a remedy in the evil itself, they had sought for ever to allay my depraved desires, they could not have chosen a shorter method to accomplish their design; and, I can assure my readers, I was for a long time freed from the dominion of them.

This severity could not draw from me the expected acknowledgment, which obstinacy brought on several repetitions, and reduced me to a deplorable situation; yet I was immoveable, and resolutely determined to suffer death rather than submit. Force, at length, was obliged to yield to the diabolical infatuation of a child, for no better name was bestowed on my constancy, and I came out of this dreadful trial, torn, it is true, but triumphant.

Nearly fifty years have expired since this adventure—the fear of punishment is no more. Well, then, I aver, in the face of Heaven, I was absolutely innocent; and, so far from breaking, or even touching, the comb, never came near the fire. It may be asked, How did this mischief happen? I can form no conception of it, I only know my own innocence.

Let any one figure to himself a character whose leading traits were docility and timidity, but haughty, ardent, and invincible in its passions; a child, hitherto governed by the voice of reason, treated with mildness, equity, and complaisance, who could not even support the idea of injustice, experiencing, for the first time, so violent an instance of it, inflicted by those he most loved and respected. What perversion of ideas! What confusion in the heart, the brain, in all the little being, intelligent and moral!—let any one, I say, if possible, imagine all this, for I am incapable of giving the least idea of what passed in my mind at that period.

My reason was not sufficiently established to enable me to put myself in the place of others, and judge how much appearances condemned me; I only beheld the rigour of a dreadful chastisement, inflicted for a crime I had not committed; yet I can truly affirm, the smart I suffered, though violent, was inconsiderable compared to what I felt from indignation, rage, and despair. My cousin, who was almost in similar circumstances, having been punished for an involuntary fault, as guilty of a premeditated crime, became furious by my example. Both in the same bed, we embraced each other with convulsive transport; we were almost suffocated; and when our young hearts found sufficient relief to breathe out our indignation, we sat up in the bed, and, with all our force, repeated a hundred times, 'Carnifex! Carnifex! Carnifex!'

Even while I write this I feel my pulse

quicken, and should I live a hundred thousand years the agitation of that moment would still be fresh in my memory. The first instance of violence and oppression is so deeply engraven on my soul that every relative idea renews my emotion: the sentiment of indignation, which in its origin had reference only to myself, has acquired such strength, and is at present so completely detached from personal motives, that my heart is as much inflamed at the sight or relation of any act of injustice (whatever may be the object, or wheresoever it may be perpetrated), as if I were the immediate sufferer. When I read the history of a merciless tyrant, or the dark and subtle machination of a knavish designing priest, I could on the instant set off to stab the miscreant, though I were certain to perish in the attempt. I have frequently fatigued myself by running after and stoning a cock, a cow, a dog, or any animal I saw tormenting another, only because it was conscious of possessing superior strength. This may be natural to me, and I am inclined to believe it is, though the lively impression of the first injustice suffered was too long and too powerfully remembered not to have added considerable force to it.

This occurrence terminated my infantine serenity; from that moment I ceased to enjoy a pure unadulterated happiness, and on a retrospection of the pleasures of my childhood, I yet feel that they ended here. We continued at Bossey some months after this event, but were like our first parents in the Garden of Eden

after they had lost their innocence; in appearance our situation was the same, in effect it was totally different. Affection, respect, intimacy, confidence no longer attached the pupils to their guides; we beheld them no longer as divinities, who could read the secrets of our hearts; we were less ashamed of committing faults, more afraid of being accused of them; we learned to dissemble, to rebel, to lie; all the vices common to our years began to corrupt our innocence and embitter our amusements. The country itself, losing those sweet and simple charms which captivate the heart, appeared a gloomy desert, or covered with a veil that concealed its beauties. We cultivated our little gardens no more: our flowers were neglected. We no longer scratched away the mould, and broke out into exclamations of delight on discovering that the grain we had sown began to shoot. We were disgusted with our situation; our preceptors were weary of us. In a word, my uncle wrote for our return, and we left Monsieur and Mademoiselle Lambercier without feeling any regret at the separation.

Nearly thirty years passed away from my leaving Bossey, without once recalling the place to my mind with any degree of satisfaction; but after having passed the prime of life, as I decline into old age, while more recent occurrences are wearing out apace, I feel these remembrances revive and imprint themselves on my heart, with a force and charm that every day acquire fresh strength; as if, feeling life fleet from me, I endeavoured to catch it again at its com-

mencement. The most trifling incidents of those happy days delight me, for no other reason than being of those days. I recall every circumstance of time, place, and persons. I see the maid or footman busy in the chamber, a swallow entering the window, a fly settling on my hand while repeating my lessons. I see the whole economy of the apartment; on the right hand Monsieur Lambercier's closet, with a print representing all the Popes, a barometer, a large almanac, the windows of the house (which stood in a hollow at the bottom of the garden), shaded by raspberry shrubs, whose shoots sometimes found entrance: I am sensible the reader has no occasion to know all this, but I feel a kind of necessity for relating it. Why am I not permitted to recount all the little anecdotes of that happy age, at the recollection of whose joys I even tremble with delight? Five or six particularly—let us compromise the latter—I will give up five, but then I must have one, and only one, provided I may draw it out to its utmost length, in order to prolong my satisfaction.

If I only sought yours, I should choose that of Mademoiselle Lambercier's posterior, which, by an unlucky fall at the bottom of the meadow, was exposed to the view of the King of Sardinia, who happened to be passing by; but that of the walnut-tree on the terrace is more amusing to me, since here I was an actor, whereas in the above-mentioned scene I was only a spectator; and I must confess I see nothing that should occasion risibility in an accident which, however laughable in itself, alarmed me for a person

I loved as a mother, or perhaps as something more.

Ye curious readers, whose expectations are already on the stretch for the noble history of the walnut-tree on the terrace, listen to the tragedy, and abstain from trembling, if you can, at the horrible catastrophe!

At the outside of the courtyard door, on the left hand, was a terrace; here they often sat after dinner; but it was subject to one inconvenience, being exposed to the rays of the sun; to obviate this defect, Monsieur Lambercier had a walnut-tree set there, the planting of which was attended with great solemnity. The two boarders were godfathers, and while the earth was being filled in round the roots, each held the tree with one hand, singing songs of triumph. In order to water it with more effect, they formed a kind of basin around its foot: myself and cousin, who were every day ardent spectators of this watering, confirmed each other in the very natural idea that it was nobler to plant trees on the terrace than colours on the breach, and this glory we were resolved to procure without sharing it with any one else.

In pursuance of this resolution we cut a slip off a willow, and planted it on the terrace, at eight or ten feet distant from the august walnut-tree. We did not forget to make a hollow round our tree; but the difficulty was how to procure a supply of water, which came from a considerable distance, and we were not permitted to fetch it; but water was absolutely necessary for our willow, and we made use of

every stratagem to obtain it. For a few days everything succeeded so well that it began to bud, and throw out small leaves, which we hourly measured, convinced (though now scarce a foot from the ground) that it would soon afford us a refreshing shade.

This unfortunate willow, by engrossing our whole time, rendered us distracted, incapable of application to any other study, and the cause of our inattention not being known, we were kept closer than before. The fatal moment approached when water must fail, and we were already afflicted with the idea that our tree must perish with drought. At length necessity, the parent of industry, suggested an invention by which we might save our tree from death, and ourselves from despair; it was to make a furrow under ground, which would privately conduct a part of the water from the walnut-tree to our willow. This undertaking was executed with ardour, but did not immediately succeed: our descent was not skilfully planned; the water did not run, the earth falling in and stopping up the furrow, and the mouth being choked with rubbish; yet, though all went contrary, nothing discouraged us: 'Labor omnia vincit improbus.' We made the basin deeper, to give the water a more sensible descent; we cut the bottom of a box into narrow planks; increased the channel from the walnut-tree to our willow, and, laying a row flat at the bottom, set two others inclining towards each other, so as to form a triangular channel; we formed a kind of grating with small sticks at the end next the

walnut-tree, to prevent the earth and stones from stopping it up, and having carefully covered our work with well-trodden earth, in a transport of hope and fear attended the hour of watering. After an interval which seemed an age of expectation, this hour arrived. Monsieur Lambercier, as usual, assisted at the operation; we contrived to get between him and our tree, towards which he fortunately turned his back.

They had no sooner emptied the first pail of water than we perceived it running to the willow; this sight was too much for our prudence, and we involuntarily expressed our transport by a shout of joy. The sudden exclamation made Monsieur Lambercier turn about; this was a pity, for at that instant he was delighted to observe how greedily the earth which surrounded the roots of his walnut-tree imbibed the water. Surprised to see two trenches partake of it, he shouted in his turn, examined, perceived the roguery, and, sending instantly for a pick-axe, at one fatal blow made two or three of our planks fly, crying out meantime with all his strength, 'An aqueduct! an aqueduct!' He redoubled his strokes, every one of which made an impression on our very hearts; in a moment the planks, the channel, the basin, the willow, were all ploughed up; nor was one word pronounced during this terrible transaction, except the above-mentioned exclamation. 'An aqueduct!' he repeated, 'an aqueduct! an aqueduct!'

It may be supposed this adventure had a still more melancholy end for the young architects;

this, however, was not the case; the affair ended here. Monsieur Lambercier never reproached us on this account, nor was his countenance clouded with a frown; we even heard him mention the circumstance to his sister with loud bursts of laughter. The laugh of Monsieur Lambercier might be heard to a considerable distance. But what is still more surprising, after the first transport of sorrow had subsided, we did not find ourselves violently afflicted; we planted a tree in another spot, and frequently recollected the catastrophe of the former, repeating with a significant emphasis, 'An aqueduct! an aqueduct!' Till then, at intervals, I had fits of ambition, and could fancy myself Brutus or Aristides, but this was the first visible effect of my vanity. To have constructed an aqueduct with our own hands, to have set a slip of willow in competition with a flourishing tree, appeared to me a supreme degree of glory! I had a juster conception of it at ten than Cæsar entertained at thirty.

The idea of this walnut-tree, with the little anecdotes it gave rise to, have so well continued, or returned to my memory, that the design which conveyed the most pleasing sensations, during my journey to Geneva in the year 1754, was visiting Bossey, and reviewing the monuments of my infantine amusements, above all the beloved walnut-tree, whose age about that time must have been verging on the third of a century; but I was so beset with company that I could not find a moment to accomplish my design. There is little appearance now of

the occasion being renewed; but though I have lost hope the desire remains, and, should I ever return to that charming spot and find my favourite walnut-tree still existing, I should water it with my tears.

On my return to Geneva I passed two or three years at my uncle's, awaiting the determination of my friends respecting my future establishment. His own son, being destined to engineering, was taught drawing and instructed by his father in the elements of Euclid. I willingly partook of these instructions, but was principally fond of drawing. Meantime they were irresolute whether to make me a watchmaker, a lawyer, or a minister. I should have preferred being a minister, as I thought it must be a fine thing to preach; but the trifling income which had been my mother's, and was to be divided between my brother and myself, was too inconsiderable to defray the expense of my studies. As my age did not render the choice very pressing, I remained with my uncle, passing my time with very little improvement, and paying pretty dear, though not unreasonably, for my board.

My uncle, like my father, was a man of pleasure, but had not learned, like him, to abridge his amusements for the sake of duty; consequently our education was neglected. My aunt was a devotee, who loved singing psalms better than thinking of our improvement, so that we were left entirely to ourselves, which liberty we never abused. Ever inseparable, we were all the world to each other; and, feeling

no inclination to frequent the company of disorderly lads of our own age, we learned none of those habits of libertinism to which our idle life exposed us. Perhaps I am wrong in charging myself and cousin with idleness at the time, for in our lives we were never less so; and, what was extremely fortunate, so incessantly occupied with our amusements that we found no temptation to spend any part of our time in the streets. We made cages, pipes, kites, drums, houses, popguns, and crossbows; spoiled the tools of my good old grandfather by endeavouring to make watches in imitation of him; but our favourite amusement was wasting paper in drawing, washing, colouring, and daubing. There came an Italian mountebank to Geneva, called Gamba-Corta, who had an exhibition of puppets, that he made play a kind of comedy. We went once to see them, but cared not to go again, being busily employed in making puppets and inventing comedies of our own, which we immediately set about making them perform, mimicking to the best of our abilities the uncouth voice of Polichinelle; and, to complete the business, my good aunt and uncle Bernard had the patience to see and listen to our imitations; but my uncle having one day read an elaborate discourse to his family, we instantly gave up our comedies and began composing sermons. These details, I confess, are not very amusing; but they serve to demonstrate that the former part of our education was well directed, since being, at such an early age, the absolute masters of our time, we found no in-

clination to abuse it, and so little in want of other companions, that we constantly neglected occasions of seeking them. When taking our walks together, we observed their diversions without feeling any inclination to partake of them. Friendship so entirely occupied our hearts that, pleased with each other's company, the simplest pastimes were sufficient to delight us.

We were soon remarked for being thus inseparable: and what rendered us more conspicuous, my cousin was very tall, myself extremely short, so that we exhibited a very whimsical contrast. His meagre figure, small sallow countenance, heavy air, and supine gait, excited the ridicule of the children, who, in the dialect of the country, nicknamed him Barnâ Bredanna; and we no sooner got out of doors than our ears were assailed with a repetition of 'Barnâ Bredanna.' He bore this indignity with more patience than I; I was instantly for fighting. This was what the young rogues aimed at. I engaged accordingly, and was beaten. My poor cousin did all in his power to assist me, but he was weak, and a single stroke brought him to the ground. I then became furious, and received several smart blows, most of which were aimed at Barnâ Bredanna. This quarrel so far increased the evil that, to avoid their insults, we could only show ourselves in the streets while they were employed at school.

I had already become a redresser of wrongs; I only wanted a lady-love to be a knight-errant in form. I presently had two. I frequently

went to see my father at Nyon, a small city in the Vaudois country, where he was now settled. Being universally respected, the affection entertained for him extended to me; and during my visits the question seemed to be who should show me most kindness. A Madame de Vulson, in particular, loaded me with caresses; and to complete all, her daughter made me her gallant. I need not explain what kind of gallant a boy of eleven must be to a girl of two-and-twenty; the artful hussies know how to set little puppets up in front, to conceal more serious engagements. On my part, I saw no discrepancy between myself and Mademoiselle Vulson, was flattered by the circumstance, and gave in to it with my whole heart, or rather my whole head, for this passion certainly reached no further, though it transported me almost to madness, and frequently produced scenes sufficient to make a spectator expire with laughter.

I have experienced two kinds of love, equally real, which have scarce any affinity, yet each differing materially from tender friendship. My whole life has been divided between these affections, and I have frequently felt the power of both at the same instant. For example, at the very time I so publicly and tyrannically claimed Mademoiselle Vulson that I could not suffer any other of my sex to approach her, I had brief but passionate assignations with a Mademoiselle Goton, who deigned to act the schoolmistress with me. Our meetings, though absolutely childish, afforded me the height of happiness. I felt the whole charm of mystery,

and repaid Mademoiselle Vulson in kind, when she least suspected it, the use she made of me in concealing her amours. To my great mortification this secret was discovered, or rather was less well kept by my schoolmistress than by me, and we were soon parted.

Mademoiselle Goton was, in fact, a singular personage. She was not handsome, yet there was a certain something in her face which could not easily be forgotten, and this, for an old fool, I am too often convinced of. Her eyes, in particular, corresponded neither with her age, her height, nor her manner; she had a lofty imposing air, which agreed extremely well with the character she assumed; but the most extraordinary part of her composition was a mixture of forwardness and reserve difficult to be conceived. While she took the greatest liberties with me, she would never permit any to be taken with her in return, treating me precisely like a child. This makes me suppose that she had either ceased herself to be a child or was yet sufficiently so to regard as mere play the danger to which this folly exposed her.

I was so absolutely in the power of both these mistresses that when in the presence of either I never thought of her who was absent; in other respects the effects they produced in me bore no affinity. I could have passed my whole life with Mademoiselle Vulson, without forming a wish to quit her: but then my satisfaction was attended only with a pleasing serenity. In numerous companies I was more particularly charmed with her. The sprightly sallies of her

wit, the arch glance of her eye, even jealousy itself, strengthened my attachment, and I triumphed in the preference she seemed to bestow on me, while addressed by more powerful rivals. It was a torment, but yet a pleasing one. Applause, encouragement, and smiles gave animation to my happiness. Surrounded by a throng of observers, I felt the whole force of love—I was passionate, transported; in a *tête-à-tête* I should have been constrained, thoughtful, perhaps unhappy. If Mademoiselle Vulson was ill, I suffered with her; would willingly have given up my own health to establish hers (and, observe, I knew the want of it from experience); absent, she employed my thoughts, I felt the want of her; present, her caresses came with warmth and rapture to my heart, though my senses were unaffected. The slight familiarities she bestowed on me I could not have supported the idea of her granting to another; I loved her with a brother's affection, but experienced all the jealousy of a lover.

With Mademoiselle Goton this passion might have acquired a degree of fury; I should have been a Turk, a tiger, had I once imagined that she treated any other as she did me; it was a favour which I had to beg for upon my knees. The pleasure I felt on approaching Mademoiselle Vulson was sufficiently ardent, though unattended with uneasy sensations; but at sight of Mademoiselle Goton I felt myself bewildered —every sense was absorbed in ecstasy. I believe it would have been impossible to remain long with her; I must have been suffocated with the

violence of my palpitations. I equally dreaded giving either of them displeasure: with one I was complaisant; with the other submissive. I would not have offended Mademoiselle Vulson for the world; but if Mademoiselle Goton had commanded me to throw myself into the flames I think I should instantly have obeyed her.

Happily, both for the latter and myself, our amours, or rather rendezvous, were not of long duration; and, though my connection with Mademoiselle Vulson was less dangerous, after a continuance of some greater length, that likewise had its catastrophe; indeed, the termination of a love-affair is good for nothing unless it partakes of the romantic and can furnish out at least an exclamation. Though my correspondence with Mademoiselle Vulson was less animated, it was perhaps more endearing; we never separated without tears, and it can hardly be conceived what a void I felt in my heart. I could neither think nor speak of anything but her. These romantic sorrows were not affected, though I am inclined to believe they did not absolutely centre in her, for I am persuaded (though I did not perceive it at that time) that being deprived of amusement bore a considerable share in them. To soften the rigour of absence, we agreed to correspond with each other, and the pathetic expressions our letters contained were sufficient to have split a rock. In a word, I had the honour of her not being able to endure the pain of separation; she came to see me at Geneva. My head was now completely turned; and during the two days she remained there I

was intoxicated with delight. At her departure I would have thrown myself into the water after her, and I absolutely rent the air with my cries. The week following she sent me sweetmeats and gloves. This certainly would have appeared extremely gallant, had I not been informed of her marriage at the same instant, and that the journey I had thought proper to give myself the honour of was only to buy her wedding garments. My indignation may easily be conceived; I shall not attempt to describe it. In this heroic fury, I swore never more to see the perfidious girl, supposing that to be the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on her. This, however, did not occasion her death; for twenty years after, while on a visit to my father, being with him on the lake, I asked who those ladies were in a boat not far from ours. 'What!' said my father, smiling, 'does not your heart inform you? It is your former love, it is Madame Cristin—Mademoiselle Vulson.' I started at the almost forgotten name, and instantly ordered the watermen to turn off, not judging it worth while to be perjured, however favourable the opportunity for revenge, in renewing a dispute of twenty years past with a woman of forty.

[1723-1728.] Thus, before my future destination was determined, did I fool away the most precious moments of my youth. After deliberating a long time on the bent of my natural inclinations, they resolved to dispose of me in a manner the most repugnant to them. I was sent to Monsieur Masseron, the city registrar,

to learn (according to the expression of my uncle Bernard) the thriving occupation of a *grapignan*. This appellation was inconceivably displeasing to me, and I promised myself but little satisfaction in the prospect of heaping up money by a mean employment. The assiduity and subjection required completed my disgust, and I never set foot in the office without feeling a kind of horror, which every day gained fresh strength. Monsieur Masseron, who was not better pleased with my abilities than I was with the employment, treated me with disdain, incessantly upbraiding me with being a fool and blockhead, not forgetting to repeat that my uncle had assured him I had 'knowledge, knowledge,' though he could not find that I knew anything; that he had promised to furnish him with a sprightly boy, but had, in truth, sent him an ass. To conclude, I was ignominiously turned out of the registry, as being a stupid fellow, being pronounced a fool by all Monsieur Masseron's clerks, and fit only to handle a file.

My vocation thus determined, I was bound apprentice; not, however, to a watchmaker, but to an engraver; and I had been so completely humiliated by the contempt of the registrar that I submitted without a murmur. My master, whose name was Monsieur Ducommon, was a young man of a very violent and boorish character, who contrived in a short time to tarnish all the amiable qualities of my childhood, to stupefy a disposition naturally sprightly, and reduce my feelings, as well as my condition, to

an absolute state of servitude. I forgot my Latin, history, and antiquities; I could hardly recollect whether such people as Romans ever existed. When I visited my father, he no longer beheld his idol, nor could the ladies recognise the gallant Jean-Jacques; nay, I was so well convinced that Monsieur and Mademoiselle Lambercier would scarce receive me as their pupil that I endeavoured to avoid their company, and have never seen them since. The vilest inclinations, the basest actions, succeeded my amiable amusements, and even obliterated the very remembrance of them. I must have had, in spite of my good education, a great propensity to degenerate, else the declension could not have followed with such ease and rapidity, for never did so promising a Cæsar so quickly become a Laridon.[1]

The trade itself did not displease me. I had a lively taste for drawing. There was nothing displeasing in the exercise of the graver; and as it required no extraordinary abilities to attain perfection as a watch-case engraver, I hoped to arrive at it. Perhaps I should have accomplished my design, if unreasonable restraint, added to the brutality of my master, had not rendered my business disgusting. I wasted his time, and employed myself in engraving medals which served me and my companions as a kind of insignia for a new-invented order of chivalry, and though this differed very little from my usual employ, I considered it as a relaxation. Unfortunately, my master caught me at this contra-

[1] An allusion to La Fontaine's fable, 'Education.'

St. Albert's College Library

band labour, and a severe beating was the consequence. He reproached me at the same time with attempting to make counterfeit money, because our medals bore the arms of the Republic, though I can truly aver I had no conception of false money, and very little of the true, knowing better how to make a Roman 'as' than one of our three-sous pieces.

My master's tyranny rendered insupportable that labour I should otherwise have loved, and drove me to vices I naturally despised, such as falsehood, idleness, and theft. Nothing ever gave me a clearer demonstration of the difference between filial dependence and abject slavery than the remembrance of the change produced in me at that period. Naturally shy and timid, effrontery was far from my nature; but hitherto I had enjoyed a reasonable liberty; this I suddenly lost. I was enterprising at my father's, free at Monsieur Lambercier's, discreet at my uncle's; but, with my master, I became fearful, and from that moment my mind was vitiated. Accustomed to live with my superiors on terms of perfect equality, to be witness of no pleasures I could not command, to see no dish I was not to partake of, or be sensible of a desire I might not express; to be able to bring every wish of my heart to my lips—judge what must become of me in a house where I was scarce allowed to speak, was forced to quit the table before the meal was half ended, and the room when I had nothing particular to do there; was incessantly confined to my work; pleasures for others, privations only for me; while the liberty

that my master and his journeymen enjoyed served only to increase the weight of my subjection. When disputes happened to arise, though conscious that I understood the subject better than any of them, I dared not offer my opinion; in a word, everything I saw became an object of desire, only because I was not permitted to enjoy anything. Farewell gaiety, ease, those happy turns of expression which formerly even made my faults escape correction! I recollect a circumstance that happened at my father's, which even now makes me smile. Being for some fault ordered to bed without my supper, as I was passing through the kitchen, with my poor morsel of bread in my hand, I saw the meat turning on the spit; my father and the rest were round the fire; I must bow to every one as I passed. When I had gone through this ceremony, leering with a wishful eye at the roast meat, which looked so inviting and smelt so savoury, I could not abstain from making that a bow likewise, adding in a pitiful tone, 'Good-bye, roast meat!' This unpremeditated pleasantry put them in such good humour that I was permitted to stay and partake of it. Perhaps the same thing might have produced a similar effect at my master's, but such a thought could never have occurred to me, or, if it had, I should not have had courage to express it.

Thus I learned to covet, dissemble, lie, and at length to steal—a propensity I never felt the least idea of before, though since that time I have never been able entirely to divest myself

of it. Desire and inability united naturally lead to this vice, which is the reason pilfering is so common among footmen and apprentices, though the latter, as they grow up, and find themselves in a situation where everything is at their command, lose this shameful propensity. As I never experienced this advantage, I never enjoyed the benefit.

Good sentiments, ill directed, frequently lead children into vice. Notwithstanding my continual wants and temptations, it was more than a year before I could resolve to take even eatables. My first theft was occasioned by complaisance, but it was productive of others which had not so plausible an excuse.

My master had a journeyman named Verrat, whose residence in the neighbourhood had a garden at a considerable distance from the house, which produced excellent asparagus. This Verrat, who had no great plenty of money, took it in his head to rob his mother of the most early production of her garden, and by the sale of it procure those indulgences he could not otherwise afford himself; but, not being very nimble, he did not care to run the hazard of a surprise. After some preliminary flattery, of which I did not comprehend the meaning, he proposed this expedition to me, as an idea which had that moment struck him. At first I would not listen to the proposal; but he persisted in his solicitations, and, as I could never resist the attacks of flattery, at length prevailed. Accordingly, I every morning repaired to the garden, gathered the best of the asparagus, and took it

to the Molard, where some good old women, who guessed how I came by it, wishing to diminish the price, made no secret of their suspicions. This produced the desired effect, for, being alarmed, I took whatever they offered, which, being taken to Monsieur Verrat, was presently metamorphosed into a breakfast, and shared with a companion of his; for, though I had procured it, I never partook of their good cheer, being fully satisfied with an inconsiderable bribe.

I executed my roguery with the greatest fidelity, seeking only to please my employer; and several days passed before it came into my head to rob the robber, and tithe Monsieur Verrat's harvest. I never considered the hazard I ran in these expeditions, not only of a torrent of abuse, but—what I should have been still more sensible of—a hearty beating; for the miscreant who received the whole benefit would certainly have denied all knowledge of the fact, and I should only have received a double portion of punishment for daring to accuse him, since, being only an apprentice, I stood no chance of being believed in opposition to a journeyman. Thus, in every situation powerful rogues know how to save themselves at the expense of the feeble.

This practice taught me it was not so terrible to thieve as I had imagined. I took care to make this discovery turn to some account, helping myself to everything within my reach that I conceived an inclination for. I was not absolutely ill-fed at my master's, and temperance was only painful to me by comparing it with the

luxury he enjoyed. The custom of sending young people from table precisely when those things are served up which seem most tempting seems well calculated to make them greedy as well as roguish. Ere long I became both, and generally came off very well—very ill when I was caught.

I recollect an attempt to procure some apples, which was attended with circumstances that make me smile and shudder even at this instant. The fruit was standing in a pantry, which, by a lattice at a considerable height, received light from the kitchen. One day, being alone in the house, I climbed upon the bread-chest to see these precious apples, which, being out of my reach, made this pantry appear the Garden of the Hesperides. I fetched the spit—tried if it would reach them—it was too short—I lengthened it with a small one which was used for game, my master being very fond of hunting —darted at them several times without success, but at length was transported to find that I was bringing up an apple. I drew it gently to the lattice—was going to seize it, when (who can express my grief and astonishment?) I found it would not pass through—it was too large. I tried every expedient to accomplish my design, sought supporters to keep the spits in the same position, a knife to divide the apple, and a lath to hold it with; at length I so far succeeded as to effect the division, and made no doubt of drawing the pieces through; but it was scarcely separated—compassionate reader, sympathise with my affliction—when both pieces fell into the pantry.

STEALING THE APPLES

Though I lost time by this experiment, I did not lose courage; but, dreading a surprise, I put off the attempt till next day, when I hoped to be more successful, and returned to my work as if nothing had happened, without once thinking of what the two indiscreet witnesses I had left in the pantry deposed against me.

The next day, a fine opportunity offering, I renew the trial. I fasten the spits together; mount up; take aim; am just going to dart at my prey—unfortunately the dragon did not sleep. The pantry door opens, my master makes his appearance, and looking up, exclaims, 'Bravo!' The pen drops from my hand.

A continual repetition of ill treatment rendered me callous; it seemed a kind of composition for my crimes, which authorised me to continue them, and, instead of looking back at the punishment, I looked forward to revenge. Being beaten like a slave, I judged I had a right to all the vices of one. I was convinced that to rob and be punished were inseparable, and constituted, if I may so express myself, a kind of traffic, in which, if I performed my part of the bargain, my master would take care not to be deficient in his. That preliminary settled, I applied myself to thieving with great tranquillity, and whenever this interrogatory occurred to my mind, 'What will be the consequence?' the reply was ready, 'I know the worst, I shall be beaten; no matter, I was made for it.'

I love good eating; am sensuous, but not greedy; I have such a variety of inclinations to gratify, that this can never predominate; and,

unless my heart be unoccupied, which very rarely happens, I pay but little attention to my appetite. For this reason I did not long confine myself to purloining eatables, but extended this propensity to everything I wished to possess, and, if I did not become a robber in form, it was only because money never tempted me greatly. My master had a closet in the workshop, which he kept locked; this I contrived to open and shut as often as I pleased, and laid his best tools, fine drawings, impressions, in a word, everything he wished to keep from me, under contribution. These thefts were so far innocent that they were always employed in his service; but I was transported at having the trifles in my possession, and imagined I stole the art with its productions. Besides what I have mentioned, his boxes contained threads of gold and silver, small jewels, valuable coins, and other money; yet, though I seldom had five sous in my pocket, I do not recollect ever having cast a wishful look at them; on the contrary, I beheld these valuables rather with terror than delight. I am convinced that this dread of taking money was, in a great measure, the effect of education. There was mingled with the idea of it the fear of infamy, a prison, punishment, and the gallows. Had I even felt the temptation, these objects would have made me tremble; whereas my failings appeared a species of waggery, and in truth they were little else; they could but occasion a good trimming, and this I was already prepared for.

But, again I say, I had no covetous longings

to repress. A sheet of fine drawing-paper was a greater temptation than money sufficient to have purchased a ream. This unreasonable caprice is connected with one of the singularities of my character, and has so far influenced my conduct that it requires a particular explanation.

My passions are extremely violent; while under their influence nothing can equal my impetuosity; I am an absolute stranger to discretion, respect, fear, or decorum; rude, saucy, violent, and intrepid, no shame can stop, no danger intimidate me. Beyond the object in view the whole world is not worth a thought; this is the enthusiasm of a moment; the next, perhaps, I am plunged in a state of annihilation. Take me in my moments of tranquillity, I am indolence and timidity itself; a word to speak, the least trifle to perform, appear an intolerable labour; everything alarms and terrifies me; the very buzzing of a fly will make me shudder; I am so subdued by fear and shame that I would gladly shield myself from mortal view. When obliged to exert myself, I am ignorant what to do; when forced to speak, I am at a loss for words; and if any one looks at me I am instantly out of countenance. If animated with my subject, I express my thoughts with ease, but in ordinary conversations I can say nothing—absolutely nothing; and the obligation to speak renders them insupportable.

I may add that none of my predominant inclinations centre in those pleasures which are to be purchased: money empoisons my delights;

I must have them unadulterated. I love those of the table, for instance, but cannot endure the restraints of good company or the intemperance of taverns; I can enjoy them only with a friend, for alone it is equally impossible; my imagination is then so occupied with other things that I find no pleasure in eating. If the warmth of my blood calls for the society of the fair sex, my heart calls still more earnestly for pure love. Women who are to be purchased have no charms for me. It is the same with all other enjoyments: if not truly disinterested, they are insipid; in a word, I am fond of those things which are only estimable to minds formed for the peculiar enjoyment of them.

I never thought money so desirable as it is usually imagined. If you would enjoy, you must transform it; and this transformation is frequently attended with inconvenience: you must bargain, purchase, pay dear, be badly served, and often duped. If I want anything, I wish to have it good of its kind; for money I am given what is bad. I ask for an egg, am assured it is new-laid—I find it stale; fruit in perfection—'tis absolutely green; a damsel—she has some defect. I love good wine, but where shall I get it? Not at my wine-merchant's—he will poison me at a certainty. I wish to be well treated; how shall I compass my design? I would make friends, send messages, write letters, come, go, wait, and in the end must be frequently deceived. Money is the perpetual source of uneasiness; I fear it more than I love good wine.

A thousand times, both during and since my apprenticeship, have I gone out to purchase some delicacy. I approach the pastry-cook's, perceive some women at the counter, and imagine they are laughing at the little epicure. I pass a fruit-shop, see some fine pears, their appearance tempts me; but then two or three young people are near, a man I am acquainted with is standing at the door, a girl is approaching—perhaps our own servant; I take all that pass for persons I have some knowledge of, and my near sight contributes to deceive me: I am everywhere intimidated, restrained by some obstacle, my desire grows with my hesitancy; and at length, with money in my pocket, I return as I went, for want of resolution to purchase what I long for.

I should enter into the most insipid details were I to relate the trouble, shame, repugnance, and inconvenience of all kinds which I have experienced in parting with my money, whether in my own person, or by the agency of others; as I proceed the reader will get acquainted with my disposition, and perceive all this without my troubling him with the recital.

This once comprehended, one of my seeming contradictions will be easily accounted for, and the most sordid avarice reconciled with the greatest contempt of money. It is a moveable which I consider of so little value, that, when destitute of it, I never wish to acquire any; and when I have a sum I keep it by me, for want of knowing how to dispose of it to my satisfaction; but let an agreeable and convenient oppor-

tunity present itself, and I empty my purse in a moment. Not that I would have the reader imagine I am extravagant from a motive of ostentation—the characteristic of misers,—quite the reverse; it was ever in subservience to my pleasures, and, instead of glorying in expense, I endeavour to conceal it. I so well perceive that money is not made to answer my purposes, that I am almost ashamed to have any, and, still more, to make use of it. Had I ever possessed a moderate independence, I am convinced I should have had no propensity to become avaricious. I should have required no more, and cheerfully lived up to my income; but my precarious situation keeps me in fear. I love liberty, and I loathe constraint, dependence, subjection. As long as my purse contains money it secures my independence, and exempts me from the trouble of seeking other money, a trouble of which I have always had a perfect horror; and the dread of seeing the end of my independence makes me unwilling to part with my means. The money that we possess is the instrument of liberty, that which we lack and strive to obtain is the instrument of slavery. Thence it is that I hold fast to aught that I have, and yet covet nothing more.

My disinterestedness, then, is only idleness; the pleasure of possessing is not in my estimation worth the trouble of acquiring: my dissipation is only another form of idleness; when we have an opportunity of disbursing pleasantly we should make the best possible use of it. I am less tempted by money than by other objects,

because between the moment of possessing the money and that of using it to obtain the desired object there is always an interval, however short; whereas to possess the thing is to enjoy it. I see a thing, and it tempts me; but if I see only the means of acquiring it, I am not tempted. Therefore it is that I have been a pilferer, and am so even now, in the way of mere trifles to which I take a fancy, and which I find it easier to take than to ask for; but I never in my life recollect having taken a liard from any one, except about fifteen years ago, when I stole seven livres and ten sous. The story is worth recounting, as it exhibits a marvellous concurrence of effrontery and stupidity that I should scarcely credit, did it relate to any but myself.

It was in Paris; I was walking with Monsieur de Francueil at the Palais-Royal, at five o'clock in the afternoon; he pulled out his watch, looked at it, and said to me, 'Suppose we go to the Opera?' 'With all my heart.' We go; he takes two tickets, gives me one, and enters before me with the other; I follow, find the door crowded, and, looking in, see every one standing; judging, therefore, that Monsieur de Francueil might suppose me concealed by the company, I go out, ask for my counterfoil, and, getting the money returned, leave the house, without considering that by the time I had reached the outer door every one would be seated, and Monsieur de Francueil might readily perceive I was not there.

As nothing could be more opposite to my

natural inclination than this proceeding, I note it to show that there are moments of delirium when men ought not to be judged by their actions: this was not stealing the money, it was stealing the use for which it was destined: the less it was a robbery, the more was it an infamy.

I should never end these details were I to describe all the gradations through which I passed, during my apprenticeship, from the sublimity of a hero to the baseness of a knave. Though I entered into most of the vices of my situation, I had no relish for its pleasures: the amusements of my companions were displeasing, and when too much restraint had made my business wearisome, I had nothing to amuse me. This renewed my taste for reading, which had long been neglected. I thus committed a fresh offence: books made me neglect my work, and brought on additional punishment, while inclination, strengthened by constraint, became an unconquerable passion. La Tribu, a woman who owned a well-known lending library, furnished me with all kinds: good or bad, I perused them with avidity, and without discrimination. I read in the workshop; I read while going on errands; I read in odd corners, sometimes for hours together; my head was turned with reading, it absorbed me wholly. My master watched me, surprised me, chastised me, took away my books. How many of these were torn, burnt, flung out of the window! How many of La Tribu's volumes lost their fellows! When I had not wherewith to pay her, I brought her my linen, my suits of clothes; the three

sous that I received every Sunday were duly handed to her.

It will be said, 'At length, then, money became necessary.' True; but this happened at a time when reading had deprived me both of resolution and activity: totally occupied by this new inclination, I only wished to read, I robbed no longer. This is another of my peculiarities; a mere nothing frequently calls me off from what I appear most attached to; I give in to the new idea; it becomes a passion, and immediately every former desire is forgotten. My heart beat with impatience to run over the new book I carried in my pocket; the first moment I was alone, I seized the opportunity to draw it out, and thought no longer of rummaging my master's closet. I cannot believe that I would have pilfered, even had my expenses been more costly. La Tribu gave me credit, and, when once I had the book in my possession, I thought no more of the trifle I was to pay for it. As money came it naturally passed to this woman; and when she chanced to be pressing, nothing was so conveniently at hand as my own effects; to steal in advance required foresight, and robbing to pay was no temptation.

The frequent reproaches and blows I received, together with my private and ill-chosen studies, rendered me reserved, unsociable, and almost deranged my reason. Though my taste had not preserved me from silly, unmeaning books, by good fortune I was a stranger to licentious or obscene ones: not that La Tribu (who was very accommodating) made any scruple of lend-

ing these; on the contrary, to enhance their worth, she spoke of them with an air of mystery which produced an effect she had not foreseen, for both shame and disgust made me constantly refuse them. Chance so well seconded my bashful disposition, that I was past the age of thirty before I saw any of those dangerous compositions, to which a fine lady of fashion has no other objection than that they must be read with one hand.

In less than a year I had exhausted La Tribu's scanty library, and was unhappy for want of further amusement. My reading, though frequently ill-chosen, had worn off my childish follies, and brought back my heart to nobler sentiments than my condition had inspired; meantime, disgusted with all within my reach, and hopeless of attaining aught else, my present situation appeared miserable. My passions began to acquire strength, I felt their influence, without knowing to what object they would conduct me. I was as far from guessing the truth as if I had been sexless, and, though past the age of boyhood, could not see beyond. At this time my imagination took a turn which helped to calm my increasing emotions, and, indeed, saved me from myself; it was, to contemplate those situations, in the books I had read, which produced the most striking effect on my mind—to recall, combine, and apply them to myself in such a manner as to become one of the personages my recollection presented, and be continually in those fancied circumstances which were most agreeable to my inclinations; in a word,

by contriving to place myself in these fictitious situations, the idea of my real one was in a great measure obliterated. This fondness for imaginary objects, and the facility with which I could gain possession of them, completed my disgust for everything around me, and fixed that inclination for solitude which has ever since been predominant. We shall have more than once occasion to remark the odd effects of a disposition misanthropic and melancholy in appearance, but which proceed, in fact, from a heart too affectionate, too ardent, which, for want of society with similar dispositions, is constrained to content itself with fictions. It is sufficient, at present, to have traced the origin of a propensity which has modified my passions, and, restraining them within bounds, has rendered me idle in action, though too ardent in desire.

Thus I attained my sixteenth year, uneasy, discontented with myself and everything that surrounded me; displeased with my occupation, without enjoying the pleasures common to my age, weeping without a cause, sighing I knew not why, and cherishing my chimerical ideas for want of realities. Every Sunday, after sermon-time, my companions came to fetch me out, wishing me to partake of their diversions. I would willingly have been excused, but when once engaged in amusements, I was more animated and enterprising than any of them; it was equally difficult to engage or restrain me: indeed, this was a leading trait in my character. In our country walks I was ever foremost, and never thought of returning till reminded by

some of my companions. I twice suffered for this, the city gates having been shut before I could reach them. The reader may imagine what treatment this procured me the following mornings; and I was promised such a reception for the third that I made a firm resolution never to expose myself to the danger of it. Notwithstanding, this dreaded third occasion came, my vigilance having been rendered useless by a cursed captain, named Monsieur Minutoli, who, when on guard, always shut the gate he had charge of half an hour before the usual time. I was returning home with my two companions, and had got within half a league of the city, when I heard them beat the retreat; I redouble my pace, I run with my utmost speed, I approach the bridge breathless and faint, see the soldiers already at their posts, and call out to them in a suffocated voice. It is too late; I am twenty paces from the guard; the first bridge is already drawn up, and I tremble to see those terrible horns advanced in the air which announce the fatal and inevitable destiny which from this moment shall follow me.

I threw myself on the glacis in a transport of despair, and literally bit the dust, while my companions, who only laughed at the accident, immediately determined what to do. My resolution, though different from theirs, was equally sudden: on the spot, I swore never to return to my master's, and the next morning, when my companions re-entered the city, I bade them an eternal adieu, conjuring them at the same time to inform my cousin Bernard

of my resolve, and the place where he might see me for the last time. . . . . .

From the commencement of my apprenticeship I had seldom seen him; at first, indeed, we saw each other on Sundays, but each acquiring different habits, our meetings were less frequent. I am persuaded his mother contributed greatly towards this change. He was to consider himself as belonging to the well-bred suburban class; I was a pitiful apprentice of Saint-Gervais. Notwithstanding our relationship, equality no longer subsisted between us, and it was degrading himself to frequent my company. As he had naturally a good heart, his mother's lessons did not take an immediate effect, and for some time he continued to visit me. Having learned my resolution, he hastened to the spot I had appointed, not, however, to dissuade me from it or to join me, but to render my flight agreeable by some trifling presents, as my own resources would not have carried me far. He gave me, among other things, a small sword, which I was very proud of, and took with me as far as Turin, where absolute want constrained me to dispose of it, and I passed it, as they say, through my body. The more I reflect on his behaviour at this critical moment, the more I am persuaded he followed the instructions of his mother, and perhaps his father likewise; for had he been left to his own feelings he would have endeavoured to retain, or have been tempted to accompany me; on the contrary, he encouraged the design, and when he saw me resolutely determined to pursue it, without seem-

ing much affected, left me to my fate. We never saw or wrote to each other from that time. I cannot but regret this loss, for his heart was essentially good, and we seemed formed for a more lasting friendship.

Before I abandon myself to the fatality of my destiny, let me contemplate for a moment the prospect that awaited me had I fallen into the hands of a better master. Nothing could have been more agreeable to my disposition, or more likely to confer happiness, than the peaceful and obscure condition of a good artificer, in so respectable a class as engravers are considered at Geneva. I could have obtained an easy subsistence, though not a fortune; this would have bounded my ambition; I should have had means to indulge in moderate pleasures, and should have continued in my natural sphere, without meeting with any temptation to go beyond it. Having an imagination sufficiently fertile to embellish with its chimeras every situation, and powerful enough to transport me from one to another, it was immaterial in which I was fixed. However far it might be from the spot where I happened to be, I could establish myself at will in the finest castle in Spain. That condition was best adapted to me which, requiring the least care or exertion, left the mind most at liberty; and this happiness I should have enjoyed. In my native country, in the bosom of my religion, family, and friends, I should have passed a calm and peaceful life, in the uniformity of a pleasing occupation, and among connections dear to my heart. I should have been a good

Christian, a good citizen, a good friend, a good workman, a good man. I should have relished my condition, perhaps have been an honour to it; and after having passed a life of happy obscurity, surrounded by my family, I should have died at peace. Soon forgotten, doubtless, at least I should have been regretted whenever I was remembered.

Instead of this—what a picture am I about to draw! Alas! why should I anticipate the miseries I have endured? The reader will have but too much of the melancholy subject.

BOOK II

[1728-1731]

THE moment in which fear had instigated my flight did not seem more terrible than that wherein I put my design in execution appeared delightful. To leave my relations, my resources, while yet a child, in the midst of my apprenticeship, before I had learned enough of my business to earn a subsistence; to run on inevitable misery and danger; to expose myself in that age of weakness and innocence to all the temptations of vice and despair; to set out in search of errors, misfortunes, snares, slavery, and death, under a more inflexible yoke than that which I had been unable to endure: this I was about to do—this was the picture I should have drawn. How different was the idea I entertained of it! The independence I seemed to possess was the sole object of my contemplation; having obtained my liberty, I thought everything attainable. I entered with confidence on the vast theatre of the world, which my merit was to captivate. At every step I expected to find amusements, treasures, and adventures; friends ready to serve,

and mistresses eager to please me. I had but to show myself, and the whole universe would be interested in my concerns; not but I could have been content with something less; a charming society, with sufficient means, might have satisfied me. My moderation was such that the sphere in which I proposed to shine was rather circumscribed, but then it was to possess the the very quintessence of enjoyment, and myself the principal object. A single castle, for instance, might have bounded my ambition. Could I have been the favourite of the lord and lady, the daughter's lover, the son's friend, and protector of the neighbours, I might have been content, and sought no further.

In expectation of this modest fortune, I passed a few days in the environs of the city, with some country people of my acquaintance, who received me with more kindness than I should have met with in town; they welcomed, lodged, and fed me cheerfully. I could not be said to live on charity; these favours were not conferred with a sufficient appearance of superiority.

I rambled about in this manner till I got to Confignon, in Savoy, at about two leagues' distance from Geneva. The vicar was called Monsieur de Pontverre: this name, so famous in the history of the republic, caught my attention. I was curious to see what appearance the descendants of the 'gentlemen of the spoon' exhibited. I went, therefore, to visit this Monsieur de Pontverre, and was received with great civility. He spoke of the heresy of

Geneva, declaimed on the authority of Holy Mother Church, and then invited me to dinner. I had little to object to arguments which had so desirable a conclusion, and was inclined to believe that priests, who gave such excellent dinners, might be as good as our ministers. Notwithstanding Monsieur de Pontverre's pedigree, I certainly possessed more learning; but I rather sought to be a good companion than an expert theologian; and his Frangi wine, which I thought delicious, argued so powerfully on his side, that I should have blushed at silencing so kind a host. I therefore yielded him the victory, or rather declined the contest. Any one who had observed my precaution would certainly have pronounced me a dissembler, though in fact I was only courteous. Flattery, or rather condescension, is not always a vice in young people; it is more often a virtue. When treated with kindness, it is natural to feel an attachment for the person who confers the obligation; we do not acquiesce because we wish to deceive, but from dread of giving uneasiness, or because we wish to avoid the ingratitude of rendering evil for good. What interest had Monsieur de Pontverre in entertaining me, treating me well, and endeavouring to convince me? None but mine; my young heart told me this, and I was penetrated with gratitude and respect for the generous priest. I was sensible of my superiority, but scorned to repay his hospitality by taking advantage of it. I had no conception of hypocrisy in this forbearance, or thought of

changing my religion; nay, so far was the idea from being familiar to me, that I looked on it with a degree of horror which seemed to exclude the possibility of such an event. I only wished to avoid giving offence to those who, I was sensible, caressed me from that motive. I wished to cultivate their good opinion, and meantime leave them the hope of success by seeming less on my guard than I really was. My conduct in this particular resembled the coquetry of some very honest women, who, to obtain their wishes without permitting or promising anything, sometimes encourage hopes they never mean to realise.

Reason, pity, and love of order certainly demanded that instead of being encouraged in my folly, I should have been dissuaded from the ruin I was courting, and sent back to my family; and this conduct any one that was actuated by genuine virtue would have pursued; but it should be observed that, though Monsieur de Pontverre was a religious man, he was not a virtuous one, but a bigot, who knew no virtue except worshipping images and telling his beads; in a word, a kind of missionary, who thought the height of merit consisted in writing libels against the ministers of Geneva. Far from wishing to send me back, he endeavoured to favour my escape, and put it out of my power to return even had I been so disposed. It was a thousand to one, but he was sending me to perish with hunger, or become a villain; but all this was foreign to his purpose; he saw a soul snatched from heresy, and restored to the

bosom of the Church; whether I was an honest man or a knave was immaterial, provided I went to mass. This ridiculous mode of thinking is not peculiar to Catholics; it is that of every dogmatical persuasion where merit consists in belief, and not in deeds.

'You are called by the Almighty,' said Monsieur de Pontverre; 'go to Annecy, where you will find a good and charitable lady, whom the bounty of the King enables to turn souls from those errors she has happily renounced.' He spoke of a Madame de Warens, a new convert, to whom the priests contrived to send those wretches who were disposed to sell their faith, and with these she was in a manner constrained to share a pension of two thousand francs bestowed on her by the King of Sardinia. I felt myself extremely humiliated at being supposed to want the assistance of a good and charitable lady. I had no objection to be accommodated with everything I stood in need of, but did not wish to receive it on the footing of charity, and to owe this obligation to a devotee was still worse; however, notwithstanding my scruples, the persuasions of Monsieur de Pontverre, the dread of perishing with hunger, the pleasures I promised myself from the journey, and hope of obtaining some desirable situation, determined me; and I set out, though reluctantly, for Annecy. I could easily have reached it in a day, but, being in no great haste to arrive there, it took me three. My head was filled with the idea of adventures, and I approached every country-seat I saw in my way in expectation of having them

realised. I had too much timidity to knock at the doors, or even enter if I saw them open, but I did what I dared—which was to sing under those windows that I thought had the most favourable appearance; and was very much disconcerted to find I wasted my breath to no purpose, and that neither young nor old ladies were attracted by the melody of my voice or the wit of my poetry, though some songs my companions had taught me I thought excellent, and that I sang them incomparably:

At length I arrived at Annecy, and saw Madame de Warens. As this period of my life determined my character, I cannot resolve to pass it lightly over. I was in the middle of my sixteenth year, and, though I could not be called handsome, was well made for my height. I had a good foot, a well-turned leg, a frank and animated countenance, a neatly-formed mouth, black hair and eyebrows, and my eyes, though small and rather too sunken, darted that innate fire which inflamed my blood. Unfortunately for me, I knew nothing of all this, never in my life having bestowed a single thought on my person till it was too late to be of any service to me. The timidity common to my age was heightened by a natural benevolence, which made me dread the idea of giving pain. Though my mind had received some cultivation, having seen nothing of the world, I was an absolute stranger to polite address, and my mental acquisitions, so far from supplying this defect, only served to increase my embarrassment by making me sensible of every deficiency.

Fearing then that my appearance might prejudice me, I had recourse to other expedients; I wrote a most elaborate letter, wherein, mingling the rhetoric which I had borrowed from books with the phrases of an apprentice, I endeavoured to strike the attention and insure the goodwill of Madame de Warens. I enclosed Monsieur de Pontverre's letter in my own, and set out to face this terrible audience. Madame de Warens was not at home; they told me she had gone to church. It was Palm Sunday, in the year 1728. I hasten after her—overtake—speak to her. The place is yet fresh in my memory—how can it be otherwise? Often have I moistened it with my tears and covered it with kisses. Why cannot I enclose with a balustrade of gold the happy spot, and render it the object of universal veneration? Whoever wishes to honour monuments of human salvation would only approach it on his knees.

It was a passage at the back of the house, bordered on the right hand by a little rivulet, which separated it from the garden, and on the left by the courtyard wall; at the end was a private door, which opened into the Church of the Cordeliers. Madame de Warens was about to enter by this door, but on hearing my voice instantly turned about. What an effect did the sight of her produce! I expected to see a devout, forbidding old woman—Monsieur de Pontverre's pious and worthy lady could be no other in my conception—instead of which I saw a face beaming with charms, fine blue eyes full of sweetness, a complexion which dazzled the sight,

the contour of an enchanting bosom—nothing escaped the eager eye of the young proselyte; from that instant I was hers! a religion preached by such missionaries must lead to paradise! My missive was presented with a trembling hand; she took it with a smile—opened it, glanced an eye over Monsieur de Pontverre's letter and returned to mine, which she read through, and would have read again, had not her footman that instant informed her that service was beginning. 'Child,' she said, in a tone of voice which made every nerve vibrate, 'you are wandering about at an early age—it is really a pity!'—and, without waiting for an answer, added, 'Go to my house, bid them give you something for breakfast: after mass I will speak to you.'

Louise-Éléonore de Warens was demoiselle de la Tour de Pil, a noble and ancient family of Vévai, a town in the country of Vaud. She was married very young to Monsieur de Warens, of the house of Loys, eldest son of Monsieur de Villardin, of Lausanne. There were no children by this marriage, which was far from being a happy one. At length some domestic uneasiness made Madame de Warens take the resolution of crossing the lake, and throwing herself at the feet of King Victor Amadeus, who was then at Evian; thus abandoning her husband, family, and country in a moment of mental excitement similar to mine, which precipitation she, too, has found sufficient time and reason to lament. The King, who was fond of appearing a zealous promoter of the Catholic faith, took

her under his protection, and complimented her with a pension of fifteen hundred Piedmontese livres, which was a considerable appointment for a prince who never had the character of being generous; but, finding his liberality made some conjecture he had an affection for the lady, he sent her to Annecy, escorted by a detachment of his guards, where, under the direction of Michel-Gabriel de Bernex, titular Bishop of Geneva, she abjured her former religion at the Convent of the Visitation.

I came to Annecy just six years after this event. Madame de Warens was then eight-and-twenty, being born with the century. Her beauty was of a lasting kind, consisting more in the expression of the countenance than in its mere features, and was still in its meridian; her manner was soothing and tender; a sweetness in her look, an angelic smile, a mouth like mine; she wore her hair (which was of an ash colour and uncommonly beautiful) with an air of negligence that made her appear still more interesting; she was short, and rather stout for her height, though by no means disagreeably so; but there could not be a more lovely face, a finer bosom, or hands and arms more exquisitely formed.

Her education had been derived from such a variety of sources that it formed an extraordinary assemblage. Like me, she had lost her mother at her birth, and had received instruction as it chanced to present itself; she had learned something of her governess, something of her father, a little of her masters, but copiously of

her lovers, particularly a Monsieur de Tavel, who, possessing both taste and information, adorned with them the mind of her he loved. These various instructions, not being properly arranged, tended to impede each other, and she did not acquire that degree of improvement her natural good sense was capable of receiving; she knew something of philosophy and physics, but not enough to eradicate the fondness she had imbibed from her father for empiricism and alchemy; she made elixirs, tinctures, balsams, pretended to secrets, and prepared magistery; while quacks and pretenders who beset her, and profited by her weakness, preyed upon her purse, and dissipated on their furnaces and chemistry and drugs those talents and charms which might have formed the delight of the best society.

But though interested wretches took advantage of her ill-applied education to obscure her natural good sense, her excellent heart retained its firmness; her amiable mildness, sensibility for the unfortunate, inexhaustible bounty, and open, cheerful frankness, knew no variation; even at the approach of old age, when attacked by various calamities, rendered more cutting by indigence, the serenity of her disposition preserved to the end of her life the pleasing gaiety of her happiest days.

Her errors proceeded from an inexhaustible fund of activity, which demanded perpetual employment. She found no satisfaction in the customary intrigues of her sex, but sought the direction of important enterprises and discoveries. In her place Madame de Longueville would have

been a mere trifler; in Madame de Longueville's situation she would have governed the state. Her talents did not accord with her fortune; what would have gained her distinction in a more elevated sphere became her ruin. In enterprises which suited her disposition she arranged the plan in her imagination, which was ever carried to its utmost extent, and the means she employed being proportioned rather to her ideas than abilities, she failed by the mismanagement of those on whom she depended, and was ruined where another would scarce have been a loser. This active disposition, which involved her in so many difficulties, was at least productive of one benefit, as it prevented her from passing the remainder of her life in the religious asylum she had chosen, which she had had some thought of doing. The simple and uniform life of a nun, the little cabals and gossipings of their parlour, were not adapted to a mind vigorous and active, which, every day forming new systems, had occasion for liberty to attempt their completion. The good Bishop de Bernex, with less wit than Francis of Sales, resembled him in many particulars, and Madame de Warens, whom he called his daughter, and who was like Madame de Chantal in several respects, might have increased the resemblance by retiring, like her, from the world, had she not been disgusted with the idle trifling of a convent. It was not want of zeal that prevented this amiable woman from giving those proofs of devotion which might have been expected from a new convert, under

the immediate direction of a prelate. Whatever might have influenced her to change her religion, she was certainly sincere in that she had embraced. She might find occasion to repent having abjured her former faith, but no inclination to return to it. She not only died a good Catholic, but truly lived one; nay, I dare affirm—and I think I have read the secrets of her heart—that it was only her aversion to singularity that prevented her acting the devotee in public; in a word, her piety was too sincere to give way to any affectation of it. But this is not the place to enlarge on her principles; I shall find other occasions to speak of them.

Let those who deny the existence of a sympathy of souls explain, if they know how, why the first glance, the first word of Madame de Warens inspired me, not only with a lively attachment, but with the most unbounded confidence, which has since known no abatement. Say this was love (which will at least appear doubtful to those who follow the story of our attachment), how could this passion from its very birth be attended with sentiments which are most foreign to its character, such as peace, serenity, security, and confidence? How, when making the first approach to an amiable and polished woman, whose situation in life was so superior to mine, so far above any I had yet encountered, on whom, in a great measure, depended my future fortune, by the degree of interest she might take in it—how, I say, with all this, did I feel myself as free, as much at my

ease, as if I had been perfectly secure of pleasing her? Why did I not experience a moment of embarrassment, timidity, or restraint? Naturally bashful, easily confused, having seen nothing of the world, how could I, the first time, the first moment I beheld her, adopt caressing language, and a familiar tone, as readily as when after ten years intimacy had rendered these freedoms natural? Is it possible to possess love—I will not say without desires, for I certainly had them—but without inquietude, without jealousy? Can we avoid feeling an anxious wish at least to know whether our affection is returned? Yet such a question never entered my imagination; I should as soon have inquired, Do I love myself? nor did she ever express a greater degree of curiosity. There was certainly something extraordinary in my attachment to this charming woman, and it will be found in the sequel that some extravagances, which cannot be foreseen, attended it.

What could be done for me was the present question, and, in order to discuss the point with greater freedom, she made me dine with her. This was the first meal in my life at which I had experienced a want of appetite; and her woman who waited observed it was the first time she had seen a traveller of my age and appearance deficient in that particular. This remark, which did me no injury in the opinion of her mistress, fell hard on an overgrown clown, who was my fellow-guest, and devoured sufficient to have served at least six moderate feeders. For me, I was too much charmed to

think of eating; my heart cherished a delicious sensation, which engrossed my whole being, and left no room for other objects.

Madame de Warens wished to hear the particulars of my little history. All the vivacity I had lost during my servitude returned and assisted the recital. In proportion to the interest this excellent woman took in my story did she lament the fate to which I had exposed myself; compassion was painted on her features, in every look and gesture. She could not exhort me to return to Geneva, being too well aware that her words and actions were strictly scrutinised, and that such advice would be thought high treason against Catholicism; but she spoke so feelingly of the affliction I must give my father that it was easy to perceive she would have approved my returning to console him. Alas! she little thought how powerfully this pleaded against herself; the more eloquently persuasive she appeared, the less could I resolve to tear myself from her. I knew that returning to Geneva would be putting an insuperable barrier between us, unless I repeated the expedient which had brought me here, and it was certainly better to adhere to my present course. I resolved to do so. Madame de Warens, seeing her endeavours would be fruitless, became less explicit, and only added, with an air of commiseration, 'Poor child, thou must go where Providence directs thee, but one day thou wilt think of me.' I believe she had no conception at that time how cruelly her prediction would be verified.

The difficulty still remained how, young as I was, I could gain a subsistence so far from home. Scarce half through my time of apprenticeship, I had but an imperfect knowledge of my trade, and, had I been more expert, Savoy was too poor a country to give much encouragement to the arts. The fellow who dined with us, and ate for us as well as for himself, being obliged to pause in order to gain some relaxation from the fatigue of eating, imparted a piece of advice, which, according to him, came express from heaven, though, to judge by its effects, it appeared to proceed from a directly contrary quarter. This was that I should go to Turin, where, in a hospital instituted for the instruction of catechumens, I should find food, both spiritual and temporal, be reconciled to the bosom of the Church, and meet with some charitable Christians, who would make it a point to procure me a situation that would turn to my advantage. 'In regard to the expenses of the journey,' continued our adviser, 'his Grace my Lord Bishop will not be backward, when once Madame has proposed this holy work, to offer his charitable donation, and Madame the Baroness, whose charity is so well known (again looking down upon his plate), will certainly contribute.'

I was by no means pleased with all these charities. I said nothing, but my heart was full. Madame de Warens, who did not seem to think so highly of this expedient as the projector pretended to do, contented herself by saying every one should endeavour to promote

good actions, and that she would mention it to his lordship; but this meddling devil, who had some private interest in the affair, and questioned whether she would urge it to his satisfaction, took care to acquaint the almoners with my story, and so far influenced those good priests that when Madame de Warens, who disliked the journey on my account, mentioned it to the bishop, she found it so far concluded on that he immediately put into her hands the money designed for my little viaticum. She dared not advance anything against it: I was approaching an age when a woman like her could not with any propriety appear anxious to retain the society of a young man.

My departure being thus determined by those who undertook the management of my concerns, I had only to submit; and I did it without much repugnance. Though Turin was at a greater distance from Madame de Warens than Geneva, yet, being the capital of the country I was now in, it seemed to have more connection with Annecy than a city under a different government and of a contrary religion; besides, as I undertook this journey in obedience to her, I considered myself as living under her direction, which was more than merely to continue in the neighbourhood; to sum up all, the idea of a long journey coincided with my passion for rambling, which already began to assert itself. To pass the mountains to my youthful eye appeared delightful; how charming the reflection of elevating myself above my companions by the whole height of the Alps! To

see the world is an almost irresistible temptation to a Genevan; accordingly I gave my consent. He who had suggested the journey was to set off in two days with his wife. I was confided and recommended to their care. They were likewise the bearers of my purse, which had been augmented by Madame de Warens, who, not contented with these kindnesses, secretly gave me a small pecuniary reinforcement, attended with ample instructions, and we departed on the Wednesday before Easter.

The day following my father arrived at Annecy, following on my trail, and accompanied by his friend, a Monsieur Rival, who was likewise a watchmaker; he was a man of sense and letters, who wrote better verses than La Motte, and spoke almost as well; what is still more to his praise, he was a man of the strictest integrity, but whose taste for literature only served to make one of his sons a comedian.

These gentlemen saw Madame de Warens, and contented themselves with lamenting with her my fate, instead of overtaking me, which (as they were on horseback and I on foot) they might have accomplished with ease. My uncle Bernard did the same thing. He arrived at Confignon, received information that I had gone to Annecy, and immediately returned to Geneva. Thus my nearest relations seemed to have conspired with my star to consign me to the fate that awaited me. By a similar negligence, my brother was lost, and so entirely lost that it was never known what had become of him.

My father was not only a man of honour, but

of the strictest probity, and endued with that magnanimity which frequently produces the most shining virtues. I may add, he was a good father, particularly to me, whom he tenderly loved; but he likewise loved his pleasures, and since we had been separated other connections had weakened his paternal affection. He had married again at Nyon, and, though his second wife was too old to expect children, she had relations. My father was united to another family, surrounded by other objects, and a variety of cares prevented my returning often to his remembrance. He was in the decline of life, and had nothing to support the inconveniences of old age; my mother's property devolved to me and my brother, but during our absence the interest of it was enjoyed by my father. This consideration had no immediate effect on his conduct, nor did it blind his sense of duty; but it had an imperceptible effect, and prevented him making use of that exertion to regain me which he would otherwise have employed; and this I think was the reason that, having traced me as far as Annecy, he stopped short, without proceeding to Chambéri, where he might have almost certainly found me; and likewise explains why, on visiting him several times since my flight, he always received me with great kindness, but never made great efforts to retain me.

This conduct in a father, whose affection and virtue I was so well convinced of, has given birth to reflections on the regulation of my own conduct which have greatly contributed to pre-

serve the integrity of my heart. It has taught me this great lesson of morality, perhaps the only one that can have any conspicuous influence on our actions, that we should ever carefully avoid putting our interest in competition with our duty, or promise ourselves felicity from the misfortunes of others; certain that in such circumstances, however sincere our love of virtue may be, sooner or later it will give way, and we shall imperceptibly become unjust and wicked in fact, however upright in our intentions.

This maxim, strongly imprinted on my mind, and reduced, though rather too late, to practice, has given my conduct an appearance of folly and whimsicality, not only in public, but still more among my acquaintances. It has been said that I affected originality, and sought to act differently from others. The truth is I neither endeavoured to conform or be singular, I desired only to act virtuously, and avoid situations which, by setting my interest in opposition to that of another person, might inspire me with a secret though involuntary wish to his disadvantage.

Two years ago, my Lord Marshal would have put my name in his will, which I took every method to prevent, assuring him I would not for the world be conscious of my name being in the will of any person, much less in his. He gave up the idea; but insisted, in return, that I should accept an annuity on his life; this I consented to. It will be said, I find my account in the alteration; perhaps I may: but oh, my benefactor, my father! I am now

sensible that, should I have the misfortune to survive you, I should have everything to lose, nothing to gain.

This, in my idea, is true philosophy, the only species consonant with the human heart; every day do I receive fresh conviction of its profound solidity. I have variously enforced it in all my later writings, but the multitude read too superficially to have noted it. If I survive my present undertaking, and am able to begin another, I mean, in a continuation of *Émile*, to give such a lively and striking example of this maxim as cannot fail to draw the reader's attention.[1] But, having made reflections enough for a traveller, it is time to continue my journey.

It turned out more agreeable than I expected: my clownish conductor was not so morose as he appeared to be. He was a middle-aged man, wore his black grisly hair in a queue, had a martial air, a strong voice, a firm step, was tolerably cheerful, and, to make up for not having been taught any trade, could turn his hand to every one. Having proposed to establish some kind of manufactory at Annecy, he had consulted Madame de Warens, who immediately gave in to the project, and he was now going to Turin to lay the plan before the minister and get his approbation, for which journey he took care to be well provided. This man had the art of ingratiating himself with the priests, whom he ever appeared eager to serve; he adopted a certain jargon which he had learned by frequenting their company, and thought

[1] See *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part iii. 20.

himself a notable preacher; he could even repeat one passage from the Bible in Latin, and it answered his purpose as well as if he had known a thousand, for he repeated it a thousand times a day. He was seldom at a loss for money when he knew what purse contained it; yet was rather artful than knavish, and, when dealing out in an affected tone his unmeaning discourses, resembled Peter the Hermit, preaching the crusade with a sabre by his side.

Madame Sabran, his wife, was a tolerably good sort of woman, more peaceable by day than by night; as I slept in the same chamber I was frequently disturbed by her wakefulness, and should have been more so had I comprehended the cause of it; but I was in the chapter of dulness, which left to nature the whole care of my own instruction.

I went on gaily with my pious guide and his restless companion, no sinister accident impeding our journey. I was in the happiest circumstances both of mind and body that I ever recollect having experienced; young, vigorous, full of health and security, placing confidence in myself and others; in that short but charming moment of human life when its expansive energy carries, if I may so express myself, our being to the utmost extent of our sensations, embellishing all nature with the charm of existence. My pleasing inquietudes became less wandering: I had now an object on which imagination could fix. I looked on myself as the work, the pupil, the friend, almost the lover, of Madame de Warens. The obliging things

she had said; the caresses she had bestowed on me; the tender interest she seemed to take in me; those charming looks, which seemed replete with love, because they so powerfully inspired it, every consideration flattered my ideas during this journey, and furnished the most delicious reveries, which no doubt, no fear of my future condition arose to embitter. In sending me to Turin, I thought they undertook to find me an agreeable subsistence there. Thus eased of every care, I passed lightly on, while young desires, enchanting hopes, and brilliant prospects employed my mind; each object that presented itself seemed to ensure my approaching felicity. I imagined that every house was filled with joyous festivity, the meadows resounded with sports and revelry, the rivers offered refreshing baths, fish wantoned in their streams, and how delightful was it to ramble along the flowery banks! The trees were loaded with the choicest fruits, while their shade offered voluptuous retreats to happy lovers; the mountains abounded with milk and cream; peace and leisure, simplicity and joy, mingled with the charm of going I knew not whither, and everything I saw carried to my heart some new cause for rapture. The grandeur, variety, and real beauty of the scene in some measure rendered the charm reasonable, in which vanity came in for its share. To go so young to Italy, view such an extent of country, and pursue the route of Hannibal over the Alps, appeared a glory beyond my age; add to all this our frequent and agreeable halts, with a good appetite and plenty to satisfy it; for in

truth it was not worth while to be sparing—at Monsieur Sabran's table what I ate could scarce be missed.

In the whole course of my life I cannot recollect an interval more perfectly exempt from care than the seven or eight days of our passing from Annecy to Turin. As we were obliged to walk Madame Sabran's pace, it rather appeared an agreeable stroll than a fatiguing journey. There still remains the most pleasing impression of it on my mind; and the idea of a pedestrian excursion, particularly among the mountains, has from this time seemed delightful. It was only in my happiest days that I travelled on foot, and ever with the most unbounded satisfaction; afterwards, occupied with business and encumbered with baggage, I was forced to act the gentleman and employ a carriage, where care, embarrassment, and restraint were sure to be my companions, and instead of being delighted with the journey, I only wished to arrive at my destination. I sought for a long time, at Paris, to meet with two companions of similar disposition, who would each agree to appropriate fifty louis of his funds and a year of his time to making the tour of Italy on foot, with no other attendance than a young fellow to carry our necessaries. I have met with many who seemed enchanted with the project, but, indeed, considered it only as a mere castle in Spain, which served well enough to talk of, without any design of putting the scheme in execution. One day, speaking with enthusiasm of this project to Diderot and Grimm, they gave in to the proposal with such

warmth that I thought the matter concluded on; but the proposal shrank to a journey on paper, in which Grimm thought nothing so pleasant as making Diderot commit a number of impieties, and shutting me up in the Inquisition for them, instead of him.

My regret at arriving so soon at Turin was tempered by the pleasure of viewing a large city, and the hope of figuring there in a conspicuous character, for my brain already began to be intoxicated with the fumes of ambition. My present situation appeared infinitely above that of an apprentice, and I was far from foreseeing how soon I should be much below it.

Before I proceed I ought to offer an excuse or justification to the reader for the great number of uninteresting particulars I am necessitated to repeat. In pursuance of the resolution I have formed to enter on this public exhibition of myself, it is necessary that nothing should bear the appearance of obscurity or concealment. I should be continually under the eye of the reader; he should be enabled to follow me in all the wanderings of my heart, through every intricacy of my adventures; he must find no void or chasm in my relation, nor lose sight of me an instant, lest he should find occasion to say, What was he doing at this time? and suspect me of not having dared to reveal the whole. I give sufficient scope to malignity in what I say, and it is unnecessary I should furnish still more by my silence.

My money was all gone, even that which I

had secretly received from Madame de Warens. I had been so indiscreet as to divulge this secret, and my conductors had taken care to profit by it. Madame Sabran found means to deprive me of everything I had, even to a ribbon embroidered with silver, with which Madame de Warens had adorned the hilt of my sword. This I regretted more than all the rest. The sword itself would have gone the same way, had I been less obstinately bent on retaining it. They had, it is true, supported me during the journey, but left me nothing at the end of it; and I arrived at Turin without money, clothes, or linen, being precisely in the situation to owe to my merit alone the whole honour of that fortune I was about to acquire.

I took care to deliver the letters I was charged with, and was immediately conducted to the hospital of the catechumens, to be instructed in that religion which in return would bestow subsistence. On entering, I passed an iron-barred gate, which was directly double-locked on me; this beginning was more imposing than pleasing, and set me thinking. I was then conducted to a large apartment, whose sole furniture consisted of a wooden altar at the farther end, on which was a large crucifix, and round it four or five chairs, that had the appearance of having been polished, but their glossiness was only occasioned by constant use. In this hall of audience were assembled four or five ill-looking banditti, my comrades in instruction, who would rather have been taken for trusty servants of the Devil than candidates for the

kingdom of Heaven. Two of these fellows were Sclavonians, but gave out they were Moors or Jews, and (as they assured me) had run through Spain and Italy, embracing the Christian faith and being baptized wherever they thought it worth the trouble. Soon after they opened another iron gate, which divided a large balcony that overlooked a courtyard, and by this avenue entered our sister catechumens, who, like me, were going to be regenerated, not by baptism, but a solemn abjuration. A viler set of idle, dirty, abandoned harlots never brought their ill odour into the fold of God: one among them, however, appeared pretty and interesting; she might be about my own age, perhaps a year or two older, and had a pair of roguish eyes, which frequently encountered mine. This was enough to inspire me with the desire of becoming acquainted with her, but she had been so strongly recommended to the care of the old governess of this respectable sisterhood, and was so narrowly watched by the pious missionary, who laboured for her conversion with more zeal than diligence, that during the two months we remained together in this house (where she had already been three) I found it absolutely impossible to exchange a word with her. She must have been extremely stupid, though she had not the appearance of it, for never was a longer course of instruction; the holy man could never bring her to a state of mind fit for abjuration; meantime she became weary of her cloister, declaring that, Christian or not, she would stay there no longer: and they were obliged to take

her at her word, lest she should grow refractory, and insist on departing as great a sinner as she came.

This little community was assembled in honour of the new-comer. Our guides made us a short exhortation. I was conjured to be obedient to the grace that Heaven had bestowed on me; the rest were admonished to assist me with their prayers, and give me edification by their good example. Our virgins then retired to their apartments, and I was left to contemplate, at leisure, that wherein I found myself.

The next morning we were again assembled for instruction. I now began to reflect, for the first time, on the step I was about to take and the circumstances which had led me to it.

I repeat, and shall perhaps repeat again, an assertion of whose truth I every day receive fresh conviction, which is, that if ever child received a reasonable and virtuous education, it was myself. Born in a family of unexceptionable morals, every lesson I received was replete with maxims of prudence and virtue. My father, though fond of gallantry, not only possessed distinguished probity, but much religion; in the world he appeared a man of pleasure, in his family he was a Christian, and implanted early in my mind those sentiments of which he felt the force. My three aunts were women of virtue and piety; the two elder were professed devotees, and the third, who united all the graces of wit and good sense, was perhaps more truly religious than either, though with

less ostentation. From the bosom of this amiable family I was transplanted to Monsieur Lambercier's, a man dedicated to the ministry, who truly believed the doctrine he taught, and acted up to its precepts. He and his sister matured by their instructions those principles of judicious piety I had already imbibed; and the means employed by these worthy people were so well adapted to the effect they meant to produce, that so far from being fatigued, I scarce ever listened to a sermon without finding myself sensibly affected, and forming resolutions to live virtuously, from which, except in moments of forgetfulness, I seldom swerved. At my aunt Bernard's religion was rather more tiresome, because they made it an employment; with my master I thought no more of it, though my sentiments continued the same. I had no companions to vitiate my morals; I became a scapegrace, not a libertine.

I possessed as much religion, therefore, as a child of my age could be supposed capable of acquiring. Why should I now disguise my thoughts? I am persuaded I had more. In my childhood I was not a child; I felt, I thought, as a man. As I advanced in years I merged into the ordinary class: in my infancy I was distinguished from it. I shall doubtless incur ridicule by thus modestly holding myself up for a prodigy. I am content. Let those who find themselves disposed laugh their fill; afterward, let them find a child that at six years old is delighted, interested, affected with romances, even to the shedding floods of tears; then shall

I feel my ridiculous vanity, and acknowledge my error.

Thus when I said that we should not converse with children on religion, if we wished them ever to possess any; when I asserted that they were incapable of communion with the Supreme Being, even in our confined degree, I drew my conclusions from observation, not from my experience; I knew that from it others could draw no conclusions. Find Jean-Jacques Rousseaus of six years old, talk to them of God at seven, and I will be answerable that the experiment will be attended with no danger.

It is understood, I believe, that a child, or even a man, is likely to be most sincere in following in that religion in which he was born and educated; we frequently detract from, seldom make any additions to it: dogmatic faith is the effect of education. In addition to this general principle, which attached me to the religion of my forefathers, I had that particular aversion our city entertains for Catholicism, which is represented there as a monstrous idolatry, and whose clergy are painted in the blackest colours. This sentiment was so firmly imprinted on my mind that I never looked into their churches, I never met a priest in his surplice, and never did I hear the bells of a procession sound, without shuddering with horror. These sensations soon vanished in great cities, but frequently returned in those country parishes which bore most similarity to the spot where I had first experienced them. Meantime this dislike was singularly contrasted by the re-

membrance of those caresses which priests in the neighbourhood of Geneva are fond of bestowing on the children of that city. If the bells of the viaticum alarmed me, the chiming for mass or vespers called me to a breakfast, a collation, to the pleasure of regaling on fresh butter, fruits, or milk. The good cheer of Monsieur de Pontverre, too, had produced a considerable effect on me; my former abhorrence began to diminish, and, looking on Popery through the medium of amusement and good living, I easily reconciled myself to the idea of enduring, though I had never entertained but a very transient and distant idea of making a solemn profession of it. At this moment such a transaction appeared in all its horrors. I shuddered at the engagement I had entered into, and its inevitable consequences. The future neophytes with whom I was surrounded were not calculated to sustain my courage by their example, and I could not help considering the holy work I was about to perform as the action of a villain. Though young, I was sufficiently convinced that, whatever religion might be the true one, I was about to sell mine; and, even should I chance to choose the best, I lied to the Holy Ghost, and merited the disdain of mankind. The more I considered, the more I despised myself, and trembled at the fate which had led me into such a predicament, as if my present situation had not been of my own seeking. There were moments when these compunctions were so strong that, had I found the door open but for an instant,

I should certainly have made my escape. But this was impossible; nor was the resolution of any long duration.

Too many secret motives fought against it. Besides, my fixed determination not to return to Geneva, the shame that would attend it, the difficulty of repassing the mountains, the distance from my country, without friends and without resources—everything concurred to make me regard my remorse of conscience as a too late repentance. I affected to reproach myself for what I had done, in order to excuse what I intended to do, and, by aggravating the errors of the past, looked on the future as an inevitable consequence. I did not say, Nothing is yet done, and you may be innocent if you please; but I said, Tremble at the crime you have committed, which hath reduced you to the necessity of going on unto the end.

It required more resolution than was natural to my age to revoke all that I might have promised myself or hoped for, to break those chains with which I was enthralled, and resolutely declare that I would continue in the religion of my forefathers, whatever might be the consequence. I was too young for such strength of mind—even had I possessed it, success was not probable. The affair was already too far advanced, and the greater my resistance, the more certainly they would have made a point of bringing it to a conclusion.

The sophism which ruined me has had a similar effect on the greater part of mankind, who lament the want of resolution when the

opportunity for exercising it is over. The practice of virtue is only difficult from our own negligence; were we always discreet, we should seldom have occasion for any painful exertion of it. We are captivated by desires we might readily surmount, give in to temptations that might easily be resisted, and insensibly get into embarrassing, perilous situations, from which we cannot extricate ourselves but with the utmost difficulty; intimidated by the effort, we fall into the abyss, saying to the Almighty, 'Why hast Thou made us such weak creatures?' But, notwithstanding our vain pretexts, He replies, by our consciences, 'I formed ye too weak to get out of the gulf, because I gave ye sufficient strength not to have fallen into it.'

I was not absolutely resolved to become a Catholic, but, as it was not necessary to declare my intentions immediately, I gradually accustomed myself to the idea, hoping meantime that some unforeseen event would extricate me from my embarrassment. In order to gain time, I resolved to make the best defence I possibly could in favour of my own opinion; but my vanity soon rendered this resolution unnecessary, for, on finding I frequently embarrassed those who had the care of my instruction, I wished to heighten my triumph by giving them a complete overthrow. I zealously pursued my plan, not without the ridiculous hope of being able to convert my converters; for I was simple enough to believe that, could I convince them of their errors, they would become Protestants.

They did not find, therefore, that facility in

the work which they had expected, as I differed from them both in regard to will and knowledge. Protestants, in general, are better instructed in the principles of their religion than Catholics; the reason is obvious, the doctrine of the former requires discussion, of the latter submission. The Catholic must content himself with the decision of others; the Protestant must learn to decide for himself. They were not ignorant of this, but neither my age nor my appearance promised much difficulty to men so accustomed to disputation. They knew, likewise, that I had not received my first communion, nor the instructions which accompany it; but, on the other hand, they had no idea of the information I had received with Monsieur Lambercier, or that I had learnt the History of the Church and Empire almost by heart at my father's; and though, since that time, nearly forgotten, when warmed by disputation it again returned to my memory.

A little old priest, but tolerably venerable, held the first conference, at which we were all convened. On the part of my comrades, it was rather a catechism than a controversy, and he found more pains in giving them instruction than in answering their objections; but, when it came to my turn, it was a different matter. I stopped him at every article, and did not spare a single remark that I thought would create a difficulty. This rendered the conference long and extremely tiresome to the audience. My old priest talked a good deal, grew very warm, frequently rambled from the subject, and extricated himself from difficulties by saying he was

not well versed in the French language. The next day, lest my indiscreet objections should injure the minds of those who were better disposed, I was had into a separate chamber, and put under the care of a younger priest, a fine speaker; that is, one who was fond of long perplexed sentences, and proud of his own abilities, if ever doctor was. I did not, however, suffer myself to be intimidated by his overbearing looks: and being sensible that I could maintain my ground, I took up the cudgels with confidence, and laid about me in the best manner I was able. He thought to overwhelm me at once with Saint Augustine, Saint Gregory, and the rest of the Fathers, but found, to his ineffable surprise, that I could handle these almost as dexterously as himself; not that I had ever read them, or he either, perhaps, but I retained a number of passages taken from my Le Sueur, and when he bore hard on me with one citation, without standing to dispute, I parried it with another, which often embarrassed him extremely. At length, however, he got the better of me for two very potent reasons; in the first place, he was of the strongest side, and, young as I was, I thought it might be dangerous to drive him to extremities, for I knew that the little old priest was satisfied neither with me nor my erudition. In the next place, the young priest had studied, I had not; this gave a degree of method to his arguments which I could not follow; and, whenever he found himself pressed by an unforeseen objection, he put it off to the next conference, saying that I was rambling from the question.

Sometimes he even rejected all my citations, maintaining that they were false, and, offering to fetch the book, defied me to find them. He knew he ran very little risk, and that, with all my borrowed learning, I was not sufficiently accustomed to books, and too poor a Latinist, to find a passage in a large volume, had I been ever so well assured it was there. I even suspected him of being guilty of a perfidy of which he accused our ministers, and that he fabricated passages sometimes in order to evade an objection that incommoded him.

During the progress of these wranglings, the days being passed in disputing, in mumbling prayers, and in petty knaveries, there happened to me a little adventure which might have been of ill consequence.

There is no mind so vile, no heart so hard, as not to be capable of some species of attachment. One of the two bandits who styled themselves Moors took a fancy to me. He was ever ready to accost me, chatted to me in his jargon, showed me attentions, and shared with me now and then his portion at meals. Though naturally disliking this fellow's gingerbread face, adorned with a long scar, I endured him, saying to myself, 'The poor man has conceived a lively affection for me; it would be cruel to repel him.' By degrees his manner became more unrestrained, and he made such strange proposals in such singular terms that I imagined his mind must have given way. I began to think him odious, for he was uncleanly, and stank of the tobacco which he was fond of chewing. One

day we were together in the hall, when he recommenced his coarse familiarities. I grew alarmed, quickly disengaged myself, and sprang backward with an exclamation, whereupon he left me, and I ran out upon the balcony. He seemed to be seized with a kind of frenzy; nothing could be more hideous than his inflamed, revolting countenance. Never, indeed, have I seen another man in a like condition.

I was eager to impart to everybody the news of what had occurred, for I was ignorant of its purport. Our old directress bade me hold my tongue, but I could hear her muttering, 'Can maladet! brutta bestia!' Unable to perceive any reason for silence, I continued to babble; so much so, that on the following morning one of the administrators came and addressed to me a sharp reprimand, accusing me of blemishing the good name of a holy institution, and magnifying a petty fault. He gravely informed me that there was no cause for extreme irritation, and told me frankly that he himself in his youth had experienced similar attentions. We had another listener, an ecclesiastic, who took the affair as coolly as he. Their easy tone imposed on me, and I listened without anger, but not without disgust. My aversion extended to the apologist; and I was hardly able to conceal from him the ill effect of his lessons. He turned on me a look which boded nothing favourable, and thenceforth did what he could to render my stay in the house disagreeable—with such good effect, indeed, that, perceiving but one way of

escape, I became as eager to adopt it as I formerly had been to avoid it.

As for the hateful African, I know not how they dealt with him. Dame Lorenza excepted, no one appeared to regard him with a less friendly eye. Meanwhile he ceased to notice or speak to me. A week afterwards he was baptized with much ceremony, attired from head to foot in white garments, to symbolise the purity of his regenerate soul.

My turn came a month after; for all this time was thought necessary by my directors, that they might have the honour of a difficult conversion, and every dogma of their faith was recapitulated, in order to triumph the more completely over my new docility.

At length, sufficiently instructed and disposed to the will of my masters, I was led in procession to the Metropolitan Church of St. John, there to make a solemn abjuration, and undergo a ceremony made use of on these occasions, which, though not baptism, is very similar, and serves to persuade the people that Protestants are not Christians. I was clothed in a kind of grey robe made for these occasions, decorated with white brandenburgs. Two men, one behind, the other before me, carried copper basins, which they kept striking with a key, and in which those who were charitably disposed put their alms, according as they found themselves influenced by religion or goodwill for the new convert; in a word, nothing of Catholic pageantry was omitted that could render the solemnity edifying to the populace or humiliating to me.

The white dress might have been serviceable, but as I had not the honour to be either Moor or Jew they did not think fit to compliment me with it.

The affair did not end here. I must now go to the Inquisition to be absolved from the sin of heresy, and return to the bosom of the Church with the same ceremony to which Henry the Fourth was subjected by his Ambassador. The air and manner of the right reverend Father Inquisitor were not calculated to dissipate the secret horror that had seized my spirits on entering this holy mansion. After several questions relative to my faith, situation, and family, he asked me bluntly if my mother was damned. Terror repressed the first gust of indignation; this gave me time to recollect myself, and I answered, 'I hope not, for God may have enlightened her last moments.' The monk made no reply, but his grimace was by no means expressive of approbation.

All these ceremonies ended, at the very moment I flattered myself I should be plentifully provided for, they exhorted me to continue a good Christian, and live in obedience to the grace I had received; then wishing me good fortune, with rather more than twenty francs of small money in my pocket, the produce of the above-mentioned collection, they shut the door on me, and all was over.

Thus, in a moment, all my flattering expectations were at an end, and nothing remained from my interested conversion but the remembrance of having been both dupe and apostate. It is

easy to imagine what a sudden revolution was produced in my ideas, when every brilliant expectation of advancement terminated by seeing myself plunged in the completest misery. In the morning I was deliberating what palace I should inhabit; before night I was reduced to seek my lodging in the street. It may be supposed that I gave myself up to transports of despair, rendered more bitter by a consciousness that my own folly had reduced me to these extremities. Nothing of the sort: I had passed two months in absolute confinement: this was new to me; I was now emancipated, and the sentiment I felt most forcibly was joy at my recovered liberty. After a slavery which had appeared tedious, I was again master of my time and actions, in a great city, abundant in resources, crowded with people of fortune, to whom my merit and talents could not fail to recommend me. I had besides sufficient time before me to expect this good fortune, for my twenty francs seemed an inexhaustible treasure, which I might dispose of without rendering an account to any one. It was the first time I had found myself so rich; and, far from giving way to melancholy reflections, I only adopted other hopes, in which self-love was by no means a loser. Never did I feel so great a degree of confidence and security. I looked on my fortune as already made, and was pleased to think that I was under obligation to no one save myself.

The first thing I did was to satisfy my curiosity by rambling all over the city, considering this as a confirmation of my liberty. I went to

see the soldiers mount guard, and was delighted with their military music. I followed processions, and was pleased with the chanting of the priests. I next went to see the King's palace, which I approached with awe, but seeing others enter I followed their example, and no one hindered me. Perhaps I owed this favour to the small parcel I carried under my arm; be that as it may, I conceived a high opinion of my consequence from being within the gates, and already thought myself an inhabitant. The weather was hot; I had walked about till I was both fatigued and hungry. Wishing for some refreshment, I went into a milk-house; they brought me some cream-cheese, curds and whey, with two slices of that excellent Piedmontese bread which I prefer to any other; and for five or six sous I had one of the most delicious meals I ever recollect to have made.

It was time to seek a lodging. As I already knew enough of the Piedmontese language to make myself understood, this was a work of no great difficulty; and I had so much prudence that I wished to adapt it rather to the state of my purse than the bent of my inclination. In the course of my inquiries I was informed that a soldier's wife in the Rue du Pô furnished lodgings to servants out of place at one sou a night, and finding one of her beds disengaged I took possession of it. She was young, and newly married, though she already had five or six children. Mother, children, and lodgers all slept in the same chamber, and it continued thus while I remained there. She was good-natured,

swore like a carter, and wore neither cap nor kerchief; but she had a gentle heart, was very obliging, and to me both kind and serviceable.

For several days I gave myself up to the pleasures of independence and curiosity. I continued wandering about the city and its environs, examining every object that seemed curious or new; and, indeed, most things had that appearance to a novice who had never seen a capital. I never omitted visiting the court, and assisted regularly every morning at the King's mass. I thought it a great honour to be in the same chapel with this Prince and his retinue; but my passion for music, which now began to make its appearance, was a greater incentive than the splendour of the court, which, soon seen and always the same, loses its attraction. The King of Sardinia had at that time the best orchestra in Europe; Somis, Desjardins, and the Bezuzzis shone there alternately: all these were not necessary to fascinate a youth whom the sound of the most simple instrument, provided it was correctly played, transported with joy. Beyond this, magnificence only produced in me a stupid admiration, without any eagerness to partake of it; my thoughts were principally employed in observing whether any young princess was present who merited my homage, and whom I could make the heroine of a romance.

Meantime, I was on the point of beginning one; in a less elevated sphere, it is true, but where, could I have brought it to a conclusion,

I should have found pleasures a thousand times more delicious.

Though I lived with the strictest economy, my purse insensibly grew lighter. This economy was, however, less the effect of prudence than a love of simplicity, which, even to this day, the frequenting of the most expensive tables has not been able to vitiate. Nothing, in my idea, either at that time or since, can exceed a rustic repast. Give me milk, vegetables, eggs, cheese, and brown bread, with tolerable wine, and I shall always think myself sumptuously regaled; a good appetite will furnish out the rest, when a *maître d'hôtel* and his lackeys cannot satiate me with their importunate attentions. Six or seven sous would then procure me a more agreeable meal than as many francs could have done since. I was abstemious, therefore, for want of a temptation to be otherwise; though I do not know but I am wrong to call this abstinence—to me it was the height of sensuousness. With my pears, new cheese, bread, and some glasses of Montferrat wine, which you might have cut with a knife, I was the happiest of epicures. Notwithstanding my expenses were very moderate, it was possible to see the end of twenty francs. I was every day more convinced of this, and, spite of the giddiness of youth, my apprehensions for the future amounted almost to terror. All my castles in Spain were vanished, and I became sensible of the necessity of seeking some occupation that would procure me a subsistence. Even this was a work of difficulty. I thought of my former trade, but knew too

little of it to be employed as a journeyman, nor do masters abound at Turin. I resolved, therefore, till something better presented itself, to go from shop to shop, offering to engrave ciphers, or coats of arms, on pieces of plate, and hoped to get employment by working at a low price, or taking what they chose to give me. Even this expedient did not answer my expectation; almost all my applications were ineffectual, the little I procured being hardly sufficient to produce a few scanty meals. However, walking one morning pretty early in the Contrà Nova, I saw a young tradeswoman behind a counter, whose figure and looks were so charmingly attractive, that, notwithstanding my timidity with ladies, I entered the shop without hesitation, and offered my service as usual, and had the happiness to have it accepted. She did not repel me, but made me sit down and relate my little history; pitied my forlorn situation; bade me be cheerful, saying that if I were every good Christian would give me assistance; then (while she sent to a goldsmith's in the neighbourhood for some tools I had occasion for) she went into the kitchen and fetched me something for breakfast. This seemed a promising beginning, nor was what followed less flattering: she was satisfied with my work, and when I had a little recovered myself, still more with my discourse. She was rather elegantly dressed, and notwithstanding her gentle looks, this gay appearance had disconcerted me; but her good-nature, the compassionate tone of her voice, with her gentle and caressing manner, soon set me at ease.

I saw my endeavours to please were crowned with success, and this assurance made me succeed the more. Though an Italian, and too pretty to be entirely devoid of coquetry, she had so much modesty, and I so great a share of timidity, that our adventure was not likely to be brought to a very speedy conclusion, nor did they give us time to complete it happily. I cannot recall the few short moments I passed with this woman without being sensible of an inexpressible charm, and can still say it was there that I tasted in perfection the most delightful as well as the purest pleasures of love.

She was a lively, pleasing brunette, and the good-nature that was painted on her lovely face rendered her vivacity more interesting. She was called Madame Basile. Her husband, who was considerably older than herself, and a little jealous, consigned her, during his absence, to the care of a clerk, too disagreeable to be thought dangerous; but who, notwithstanding, had pretensions that he seldom showed any signs of, except in the way of ill-humour, a good share of which he bestowed on me, though I was pleased to hear him play the flute, of which he was a tolerable master. This second Egisthus was sure to grumble whenever he saw me go into his mistress's apartment, treating me with a degree of disdain which she took care to repay with interest, seeming pleased to caress me in his presence, on purpose to torment him. This kind of revenge, though perfectly to my taste, would have been still more charming in a *tête-à-tête*, but she did not proceed so far; at least

there was a difference. Whether she thought me too young, that she had not the art of making advances, or that she was seriously resolved to be virtuous, she had at such times a kind of reserve which, though not absolutely discouraging, kept my passion within bounds. I did not feel the same real and tender respect for her as for Madame de Warens. I was embarrassed, agitated, feared to look, and hardly dared to breathe in her presence, yet to have left her would have been worse than death. How fondly did my eyes devour whatever they could gaze on without being perceived!—the flowers on her gown, the point of her pretty foot, the interval of a round white arm that appeared between her glove and ruffle, the like interval sometimes apparent between her bodice and kerchief—each object increased the force of the rest. Gazing thus on what was to be seen, and even more, my sight became confused, my chest seemed contracted, respiration was every moment more painful. I had the utmost difficulty to hide my agitation, to prevent my sighs from being heard, and this difficulty was increased by the silence in which we were frequently plunged. Happily Madame Basile, busy at her work, saw nothing of all this, or seemed not to see it; yet I sometimes observed a kind of sympathy, especially by the frequent rising of her kerchief, and this dangerous sight almost mastered every effort; but when on the point of giving way to my transports, she spoke a few words to me with an air of tranquillity, which restored me to my senses.

I saw her several times alone in this manner, without a word, a gesture, or even a look too expressive, making the least intelligence between us. This situation was both my torment and delight, for hardly in the simplicity of my heart could I imagine the cause of my uneasiness. I should suppose these *tête-à-tête* meetings could not be displeasing to her: at least she sought pretty frequent occasions to renew them. This was a very disinterested labour, certainly, as appeared by the use she made, or ever suffered me to make, of them.

Being one day wearied with the clerk's commonplace discourse, she had retired to her chamber. I made haste to finish what I had to do in the back shop, and followed her. The door was half-open, and I entered without being perceived. She was embroidering near a window on the opposite side of the room; she could not see me, and the carts in the streets made too much noise for me to be heard. She was always well dressed, but this day her attire bordered on coquetry. Her attitude was graceful; her head, leaning gently forward, discovered the whiteness of her neck; her hair, elegantly dressed, was ornamented with flowers; her figure was universally charming, and I had an uninterrupted opportunity to admire it. I was absolutely in a state of ecstasy; and, involuntarily sinking on my knees, I passionately extended my arms towards her, certain she could not hear, and having no conception that she could see me; but there was a chimney-glass at the end of the room that betrayed me. I am ignorant

what effect this transport produced on her; she did not speak, she did not look on me; but, partly turning her head, with the movement of her finger only, she pointed to the mat which was at her feet. To start up, with an articulate cry of joy, and occupy the place she had indicated was the work of a moment; but it will hardly be believed, I dared attempt no more, not even to speak, raise my eyes to hers, or rest an instant on her knees, though in an attitude which seemed to render such a support necessary. I was dumb, immoveable, but far enough from a state of tranquillity—all agitation, joy, gratitude, ardent indefinite wishes, restrained by the fear of giving displeasure, which my unpractised heart too much dreaded.

She appeared neither more tranquil nor less intimidated than myself. Uneasy at my present situation, confounded at having brought me there, beginning to tremble for the effects of a sign which she had made without reflecting on the consequences, she neither encouraged me nor expressed disapprobation: her eyes fixed on her work, she endeavoured to appear unconscious of my presence at her feet; but all my stupidity could not hinder me from concluding that she partook of my embarrassment, perhaps my transports, and was only restrained by a bashfulness like mine, without even that supposition giving me power to surmount it. Five or six years older than myself, every advance, according to my idea, should have been made by her; and, since she did nothing to embolden me, I concluded that audacity would offend her. Even

ROUSSEAU AND MADAME BASILE

at this time I am inclined to believe I thought right; she certainly had wit enough to perceive that a novice like me had occasion, not only for encouragement, but instruction.

I am ignorant how this animated, though dumb, scene would have ended, or how long I should have continued immoveable in this ridiculous, though delicious, situation, had we not been interrupted. In the height of my agitation I heard the opening of the kitchen door, which joined Madame Basile's chamber, when she, being alarmed, said, with a quick voice and action, 'Get up! here's Rosina!' Rising hastily, I seized one of her hands, which she held out to me, and gave it two eager kisses; at the second I felt this charming hand press gently on my lips. Never in my life did I enjoy so sweet a moment; but the occasion I had lost returned no more, this being the conclusion of our youthful amours.

Such may be the reason that the image of this amiable woman yet remains imprinted on my heart in such charming colours, which have even acquired fresh lustre since I became acquainted with the world and the sex. Had she been mistress of the least degree of experience, she would have taken other measures to animate so youthful a lover; but, if her heart was weak, it was virtuous, and only suffered itself to be borne away by a powerful though involuntary inclination. This was, apparently, her first infidelity, and I should perhaps have found more difficulty in vanquishing her scruples than my own: but, without proceeding so far,

I experienced in her company the most inexpressible delights. Never did I taste with any other woman pleasures equal to those few minutes which I passed at the feet of Madame Basile without even daring to touch her gown. I am convinced no satisfaction can be compared to that we feel with a virtuous woman we esteem; all is transport! A sign with the finger, a hand lightly pressed against my lips, were the only favours I ever received from Madame Basile, yet the bare remembrance of these trifling condescensions continues to transport me.

It was in vain I watched the two following days for another *tête-à-tête*. It was impossible to find an opportunity, nor could I perceive on her part any desire to forward it; her behaviour was not colder, but more distant than usual, and I believe she avoided my looks, for fear of not being able sufficiently to govern her own. The cursed clerk was more vexatious than ever; he even became a wit and satirist, telling me, with a sneer, that I should unquestionably make my way among the ladies. I trembled lest I should have been guilty of some indiscretion; and looking on myself as already engaged in an intrigue, endeavoured to cover with an air of mystery an inclination which hitherto certainly had no great need of it. This made me more circumspect in my choice of opportunities, and by resolving only to seize such as should be free from danger, I met with none.

Another romantic folly, which I could never overcome, and which, joined to my natural

timidity, tended directly to contradict the clerk's predictions, is that I always loved too sincerely —too perfectly, I may say—to find happiness easily attainable. Never were passions at the same time more lively and pure than mine; never was love more tender, more true, or more disinterested; freely would I have sacrificed my own happiness to that of the object of my affection; her reputation was dearer than my life, and no prospect of enjoyment could have tempted me to compromise her peace of mind for a moment. This disposition has ever made me employ so much care, use so many precautions, such secrecy in my love-adventures, that all of them have failed—in a word, my want of success with women has ever proceeded from having loved them too well.

To return to our Egisthus the fluter :—It was remarkable that in becoming more insupportable the traitor put on the appearance of complaisance. From the first day that his mistress had taken me under her protection, she had endeavoured to make me serviceable in the warehouse; and, finding I understood arithmetic tolerably well, she proposed his teaching me to keep the books, a proposition that was but indifferently received by this humourist, who might, perhaps, be fearful of being supplanted. As this failed, my whole employ, besides what engraving I had to do, was to transcribe some bills and accounts, to make clean copies of sundry books, and translate commercial letters from Italian into French. All at once he thought fit to accept the before-rejected proposal, saying he would teach me

book-keeping by double entry, and put me in a situation to offer my services to Monsieur Basile on his return; but there was something false, malicious, and ironical in his air and manner, that was by no means calculated to inspire me with confidence. Madame Basile replied archly that I was much obliged to him for his kind offer, but she hoped fortune would be more favourable to my merits; for it would be a great misfortune, with so much talent, that I should only become clerk.

She often said she would procure me some acquaintance that might be useful; she doubtless felt the necessity of parting with me, and had prudently resolved on it. Our mute declaration had been made on a Thursday; the Sunday following she gave a dinner. A Jacobin of good appearance was among the guests, to whom she did me the honour to present me. The monk treated me very affectionately, congratulated me on my late conversion, mentioned several particulars of my story, which plainly showed he had been made acquainted with it; then, tapping me familiarly on the cheek, bade me be good, to keep up my spirits, and come to see him at his convent, where he should have more opportunity to talk with me. I judged him to be a person of some consequence by the deference that was paid him; and by the paternal tone he assumed with Madame Basile, to be her confessor. I likewise remember that his decent familiarity was attended with an appearance of esteem, and even respect for his fair penitent, which then made less impression on me than at

present. Had I possessed more experience, how should I have congratulated myself on having touched the heart of a young woman respected by her confessor!

The table not being large enough to accommodate all the company, a small one was prepared, where I had the satisfaction of dining with our agreeable clerk; but I lost nothing with regard to attention and good cheer, for several plates were sent to the side-table which were certainly not intended for him. Thus far all went well: the ladies were in good spirits, and the gentlemen very gallant, while Madame Basile did the honours of the table with peculiar grace. In the midst of the dinner we heard a chaise stop at the door, and presently some one coming upstairs—it was Monsieur Basile. Methinks I now see him entering, in his scarlet coat with gold buttons; from that day I have held the colour in abhorrence. Monsieur Basile was a tall, handsome man, of good address. He entered with a consequential look and an air of taking his family unawares, though none but friends were present. His wife ran to meet him, threw her arms about his neck, and gave him a thousand caresses, which he received with indifference; and without making any return, saluted the company and took his place at table. They were just beginning to speak of his journey, when, casting his eye on the small table, he asked in a sharp tone what lad that was. Madame Basile told him ingenuously. He then inquired whether I lodged in the house, and was answered in the negative. 'Why not?' replied he rudely;

'since he stays here all day, he might as well remain all night too.' The monk now interfered, with a serious and true eulogium on Madame Basile. In a few words he made mine also, adding that, so far from blaming, he ought to further the pious charity of his wife, since it was evident she had not passed the bounds of discretion. The husband answered with an air of petulance, which, restrained by the presence of the monk, he endeavoured to stifle; it was, however, sufficient to let me understand he had already received information of me, and that our worthy clerk had rendered me an ill office.

We had hardly risen from table, when the latter came in triumph from his employer to inform me I must leave the house that instant, and never more during my life dare to set foot there. He took care to aggravate this commission by everything that could render it cruel and insulting. I departed without a word, my heart overwhelmed with sorrow, less for being obliged to quit this amiable woman than at the thought of leaving her to the brutality of her husband. He was certainly right to wish her faithful; but though prudent and well-born, she was an Italian—that is to say, tender and vindictive, which made me think he was extremely imprudent in using means the most likely in the world to draw on himself the very evil he dreaded.

Such was the success of my first adventure. I walked several times up and down the street, wishing to get a sight of her whom my heart incessantly regretted; but I could only discover

her husband, or the vigilant clerk, who, perceiving me, made a sign with the measuring-wand which they used in the shop, more expressive than alluring. Finding, therefore, that I was so completely watched, my courage failed, and I went no more. I wished, at least, to find out the patron she had provided me, but unfortunately I did not know his name. Several times I strolled round the convent, endeavouring in vain to meet with him. At length other events banished the delightful remembrance of Madame Basile; and in a short time I so far forgot her that I remained as simple, as much a novice, as ever, nor did my fancy for pretty women even receive any sensible augmentation.

Her liberality had, however, increased my little wardrobe, though she had done this with precaution and prudence, regarding neatness more than decoration, and to make me comfortable rather than elegant. The coat I had brought from Geneva was yet wearable; she only added a hat and some linen. I had no ruffles, nor would she give me any, though I greatly desired them. She was satisfied with having put it in my power to keep myself decently clothed, though a charge to do this was unnecessary while I was to appear before her.

A few days after this catastrophe, my hostess, who, as I have already said, was very friendly, with great satisfaction informed me she had heard of a situation, and that a lady of quality desired to see me. I immediately thought myself on the road to great adventures, that being

the point to which all my ideas tended; this, however, did not prove so brilliant as I had conceived it. I waited on the lady with the servant who had mentioned me. She asked a number of questions, and, my answers not displeasing her, I immediately entered into her service, not indeed in the quality of a favourite, but as a footman. I was clothed like the rest of her people, the only difference being, they wore a shoulder-knot, which I had not; and as there was no lace on her livery, it appeared merely a tradesman's suit. This was the unforeseen conclusion of all my great expectancies.

The Comtesse de Vercellis, in whose household I now lived, was a widow without children. Her husband was a Piedmontese, but I always believed her to be a Savoyard, as I could have no conception that a native of Piedmont could speak such good French, and with so pure an accent. She was a middle-aged woman, of a noble appearance and cultivated understanding, being fond of French literature, in which she was well versed. She corresponded much, and always in French. Her letters had the expression and almost the elegance of Madame de Sévigné's; some of them might have been taken for hers. My principal employ, which was by no means displeasing to me, was to write from her dictation, a cancer in the breast, from which she suffered extremely, not permitting her to write herself.

Madame de Vercellis not only possessed a good understanding, but a strong and elevated soul. I was with her during her last illness,

and saw her suffer and die, without showing an instant of weakness, or the least effort of constraint; still retaining her feminine manners, without entertaining an idea that such fortitude gave her any claim to philosophy—a word which was not yet in fashion, nor comprehended by her in the sense it bears at present. This strength of disposition sometimes extended almost to harshness, ever appearing to feel as little for others as herself; and when she relieved the unfortunate, it was rather for the sake of acting rightly than from a principle of real commiseration. I frequently experienced the effect of this insensibility during the three months I remained with her. It would have been natural to have an esteem for a young man of some abilities, who was incessantly under her observation; that she should think, as she felt her dissolution approaching, that after her death he would have occasion for assistance and support; but whether she judged me unworthy of particular attention, or that those who narrowly watched all her motions gave her no opportunity to think of any but themselves, she did nothing for me.

I very well recollect that she showed some curiosity to know my story, frequently questioning me, and appearing pleased when I showed her the letters I wrote to Madame de Warens, or explained my sentiments; but as she never discovered her own, she certainly did not take the right means to come at them. My heart, naturally communicative, loved to display its feelings whenever I encountered a similar dis-

position; but dry, cold interrogatories, without any sign of blame or approbation on my answers, gave me no confidence. Not being able to determine whether my discourse was agreeable or displeasing, I was ever in fear, and thought less of expressing my ideas than of being careful not to say anything that might seem to my disadvantage. I have since remarked that this dry method of questioning themselves into people's characters is a common trick among women who pride themselves upon superior understanding. These imagine that by concealing their own sentiments they shall the more easily penetrate into yours, being ignorant that this method destroys the confidence so necessary to make us reveal them. A man, on being questioned, is immediately on his guard; and if he once supposes that, without any interest in his concerns, you only wish to set him a-talking, either he entertains you with lies, is silent, or, examining every word before he utters it, rather chooses to pass for a fool than to be the dupe of your curiosity. In short, it is ever a bad method to attempt to read the hearts of others by endeavouring to conceal our own.

Madame de Vercellis never addressed a word to me which seemed to express affection, pity, or benevolence. She questioned me coldly; I answered with reserve. My answers were so timid that she must have found them mean, and grew tired of them. Towards the last she questioned me no more, and talked of nothing but her service. She drew her judgment less from what I really was than from what she had

made me, and by considering me as a footman prevented my appearing otherwise.

I am inclined to think I suffered at that time by the same interested game of concealed manœuvre which has crossed me throughout my life, and given me a very natural aversion for the apparent order of things which produces it. Madame de Vercellis having no children, her nephew, the Comte de la Roque, was her heir, and paid his court assiduously, as did her principal domestics, who, seeing her end approaching, endeavoured to take care of themselves; in short, so many were busy about her that she could hardly have found time to think of me. At the head of her household was a Monsieur Lorenzi, an artful fellow, with a still more artful wife, who had so far insinuated herself into the good graces of her mistress that she was rather on the footing of a friend than a servant. She had introduced a niece of hers as lady's-maid; her name was Mademoiselle Pontal, a sly damsel, that gave herself the airs of a waiting gentlewoman, and assisted her aunt so well in besetting the Comtesse, that she only saw with their eyes and acted through their hands. I had not the happiness to please this worthy triumvirate. I obeyed, but did not wait on them, not conceiving that my duty to our general mistress required me to be a servant to her servants. Besides this, I was a person who gave them some inquietude. They saw I was not in my proper situation, and feared the Comtesse would discover it likewise, and by placing me in it decrease their portions; for such sort of

people, too greedy to be just, look on every legacy given to others as a diminution of their own wealth; they endeavoured, therefore, to keep me as much out of her sight as possible. She loved to compose letters, which was a kind of diversion in her situation, but they contrived to give her a distaste for it, persuading her, by the aid of the doctor, that it was too fatiguing; and, under pretence that I did not understand how to wait on her, they employed two great clumsy chairmen for that purpose. In a word, they managed the affair so well that for eight days before she made her will I had not been permitted to enter the chamber. Afterwards I went in as usual, and was even more assiduous than any one, being afflicted at the sufferings of this unhappy lady, whom I truly respected and loved for the constancy with which she bore her illness; and often did I shed tears of real sorrow without being perceived by any one.

At length we lost her—I saw her expire. She had lived like a woman of sense and virtue, her death was that of a philosopher. I can truly say she rendered the Catholic religion amiable to me by the serenity with which she fulfilled its dictates, without any mixture of negligence or affectation. She was naturally serious, but towards the end of her illness she possessed a kind of gaiety, too regular to be assumed; it was but a counterpoise given by reason itself against the sadness of her situation. She only kept her bed two days, continuing to discourse cheerfully with those about her to the very last. At length, having ceased to speak,

and already combating the agonies of death, she broke wind loudly. 'Good,' said she, and turned in her bed; 'she who breaks wind is not dead.' These were the last words she pronounced.

She had bequeathed a year's wages to all the under-servants, but, not being on the household list, I had nothing. The Comte de la Roque, however, ordered them to give me thirty livres and the new coat I had on, which Monsieur Lorenzi would have taken from me. He even promised to procure me a place, giving me permission to wait on him. Accordingly I went two or three times, without being able to speak to him, and as I was easily repulsed returned no more; that I was wrong will be seen hereafter.

Would I had finished what I have to say of my stay at Madame de Vercellis'! Though my situation apparently remained the same, I did not leave her house as I had entered it. I carried away with me the long remembrance of a crime; an insupportable weight of remorse which yet hangs on my conscience, though forty years have passed, and whose bitter recollection, far from weakening, gathers strength as I grow old. Who would believe that a childish fault should be productive of such melancholy consequences? But it is for the more than probable effects that my heart cannot be consoled. I have, perhaps, caused an amiable, honest, estimable girl, who was assuredly much better than I, to perish with shame and misery.

Though it is very difficult to break up housekeeping without confusion, and the loss of some property, yet such were the fidelity of the do-

mestics, and the vigilance of Monsieur and Madame Lorenzi, that no article of the inventory was found wanting; in short, nothing was missing but a pink and silver ribbon, which belonged to Mademoiselle Pontal. Though several things of more value were within my reach, this ribbon alone tempted me, and I stole it. As I took no great pains to conceal the bauble, it was soon discovered; they immediately insisted on knowing from whence I had taken it. This perplexed me. I hesitated; and at length said, with confusion, that Marion had given it me. Marion was a young Mauriennese, and had been cook to Madame de Vercellis ever since she left off entertaining company; for, being sensible that she had more need of good broths than fine ragoûts, she had discharged her former one. Marion was not only pretty, but had that freshness of colour only to be found among the mountains, and, above all, an air of modesty and sweetness which made it impossible to see her without affection. She was besides a good girl, virtuous, and of such strict fidelity that every one was surprised at hearing her named. They had hardly less confidence in me, and judged it necessary to verify which of us was the thief. Marion was sent for; a great number of people were present, among whom was the Comte de la Roque. She arrives; they show her the ribbon; I accuse her boldly; she remains confused and speechless, casting a look on me that would have disarmed a demon, but which my barbarous heart resisted. At length she denied it with firmness, but

without anger, exhorting me to recollect myself, and not injure an innocent girl who had never wronged me. With infernal impudence I confirmed my accusation, and to her face maintained she had given me the ribbon: on which the poor girl, bursting into tears, said these words: 'Ah, Rousseau! I thought you of a good disposition. You render me very unhappy, but I would not be in your situation.' That was all. She continued to defend herself with as much simplicity as firmness, but without uttering the least invective against me. Her moderation, compared to my positive tone, did her an injury; as it did not appear natural to suppose on one side such diabolical assurance, on the other such angelic mildness. The affair could not be absolutely decided, but the presumption was in my favour; they would not take further trouble in unravelling the matter; and the Comte de la Roque, in sending us both away, contented himself with saying 'the conscience of the guilty would avenge the innocent.' His prediction was true, and is being daily verified.

I am ignorant of what became of the victim of my calumny, but there is little probability of her having been able to place herself agreeably after this, as she laboured under an imputation cruel to her character in every respect. The theft was a trifle, yet it was a theft, and, what was worse, employed to seduce a boy; while falsehood and obstinacy left nothing to hope from a person in whom so many vices were united. I do not even look on the misery and disgrace in which I plunged her as the greatest

evil: who knows, at her age, whither contempt and abandonment might have led her? Alas! if remorse for having made her unhappy is insupportable, what must I have suffered at the thought of rendering her even worse than myself?

The cruel remembrance of this transaction sometimes so troubles and disorders me that, in my disturbed slumbers, I imagine I see this poor girl enter and reproach me with my crime, as though I had committed it but yesterday. While in easy and tranquil circumstances, I was less miserable on this account, but, during a troubled, agitated life, it has robbed me of the sweet consolation of persecuted innocence, and made me wofully experience what, I think, I have remarked in one of my works, that remorse sleeps in the sunshine of prosperity, but wakes amid the storms of adversity. I could never take on me to discharge my heart of this weight in the bosom of a friend, nor could the closest intimacy ever encourage me to it, even with Madame de Warens: all I could do was to own I had to accuse myself of an atrocious crime, but never said in what it consisted. The weight, therefore, has remained heavy on my conscience to this day; and I can truly own that the desire of relieving myself in some measure from it contributed greatly to the resolution of writing my Confessions.

I have proceeded candidly in that I have just made, and it will certainly not be thought that I have sought to palliate the turpitude of my offence; but I should not fulfil the purpose of

this undertaking did I not, at the same time, divulge my inward disposition, and excuse myself as far as is conformable with truth. Never was wickedness farther from my thoughts than in that cruel moment; and when I accused the unhappy girl, it is strange, but it is true, that my friendship for her was the cause of it. She was present to my thoughts; I formed my excuse from the first object that presented itself. I accused her of doing what I meant to have done, and, as I designed to have given her the ribbon, asserted she had given it to me. When she appeared my heart was agonised, but the presence of so many people was more powerful than my compunction. I did not greatly fear punishment, but I dreaded shame: I dreaded it more than death, more than the crime, more than all the world. I would have buried, stifled myself in the centre of the earth: invincible shame bore down every other sentiment; shame alone caused all my impudence, and the more I became criminal, the more the terror of acknowledging it rendered me intrepid. I felt no dread but that of being detected, of being publicly, and to my face, declared a thief, liar, and calumniator; an all-pervading fear of this overcame every other sensation. Had I been left to myself, I should infallibly have declared thetruth. Or if Monsieur de la Roque had taken me aside, and said, 'Do not injure this poor girl; if you are guilty, own it,' I am convinced I should instantly have thrown myself at his feet; but they intimidated, instead of encouraging me. It is also just to make some allowance for age.

I was hardly out of my childhood, or rather was yet in it. In youth, dark, premeditated villany is more criminal than in a riper age, but weaknesses are much less so; my fault was truly nothing more. For this reason its remembrance afflicts me much less on account of the mischief itself than for that which it must have caused. It had one good effect, however, in preserving me through the rest of my life from any action tending to crime, by the terrible impression that has remained from the only one I ever committed; and I think my aversion for lying proceeds in a great measure from regret at having been guilty of so black a one. If it is a crime that can be expiated, as I dare believe, forty years of uprightness and honour on various difficult occasions, with the many misfortunes that have overwhelmed my latter years, may have served the purpose. Poor Marion has so many avengers in this world, that however great my offence towards her, I do not fear to bear the guilt with me. This is all I have to say upon this article. May I be permitted never to mention it again.

BOOK III

[1728-1731]

LEAVING the service of Madame de Vercellis nearly as I had entered it, I returned to my former hostess, and remained there five or six weeks; during which time health, youth, and laziness frequently rendered my temperament importunate. I was restless, absent-minded, and thoughtful. I wept and sighed for a happiness of which I had no idea, though at the same time sensible of a privation. This situation is indescribable. Few men can even form any conception of it, because, in general, they have anticipated that plenitude of life, at once tormenting and delicious, which, in the intoxication of desire, gives a foretaste of enjoyment. My excited brain was incessantly occupied with girls and women, but in a manner peculiar to myself. These ideas kept my senses in a perpetual and disagreeable activity, though fortunately they did not point out the means of deliverance. I would have given my life to have met with a Mademoiselle Goton; but the time was past in which the play of infancy predominated; increase of years had introduced shame, the inseparable companion of a conscious deviation from rectitude, which so confirmed

my natural timidity as to render it invincible; and never, either at that time or since, could I prevail on myself to offer an amorous proposition (unless in a manner constrained to it by previous advances), even with those whose scruples I had no cause to dread.

My uneasiness grew to such a pitch that, unable to find satisfaction, I humoured my longings by extravagant devices. I sought out shaded walks and hidden corners, where I might show myself to persons of the other sex in the attitude I should have liked to adopt in their presence. There was no obscenity in this, but much that was ridiculous. The silly pleasure that I derived from this proceeding is indescribable. There was but a step between my action and the reception of the treatment I wished for, and I doubt not that some passing girl, more resolute than the rest, might have paused and obliged me, had I had the audacity to wait. This folly met with a catastrophe almost as comical, but less pleasing to me.

One day I took up my post at the further end of a courtyard in which was a well, whither the maidservants often resorted to fetch water. At the extremity of the yard was a descent leading by several passages to cellars. I examined as best I could in the gloom these underground ways, and, finding them long and dark, presumed them to be interminable, and that, if I were surprised, I should there find a sure refuge. Confident of this, I offered to the eyes of the girls who came to draw water a spectacle more ludicrous than seductive. The

more prudent pretended not to see me; others began to laugh; others felt insulted, and raised a clamour. I betook myself to my retreat; I was followed. I heard the voice of a man; on this I had not reckoned, and I became alarmed. At the risk of losing myself I ran down the passages; the noise, the loud cries, especially the man's, still pursued me. I had counted on the security of darkness; I beheld a light. This made me shudder, and I rushed onward till stopped by a wall, where I was forced to await my fate. The next moment there came and seized me a great fellow with a great moustache, a great hat, and a great sabre, escorted by four or five old women armed with broomsticks, and among the rest I perceived the artful little wench who had detected me, and who was no doubt longing to see my face.

The man with the sabre, taking hold of my arm, rudely asked me what I was doing there. It may be supposed that I was unprovided with a reply; nevertheless, I recovered my presence of mind, and racking my brain in this critical moment, I hit on a wild expedient that served the purpose. In a suppliant tone I asked him to pity my age and condition, saying that I was a young foreigner of noble birth, whose wits were deranged; that I had escaped from home because they were about to put me under restraint; that I would be ruined if he published the matter, but that if he would let me depart I might be able to show my gratitude to him at a future time. Most unexpectedly, my words and manner wrought their effect; terrible as he

seemed, he relented, and after a brief reprimand, suffered me to go away quietly without further question. I judged by the countenances of the women when I was departing that the presence of the man had been of great service to me, and that had I had to deal with them alone I should not have got off so cheaply. I heard them muttering something—I knew not what and cared less; for, if the sword and its bearer were not brought into play, I felt assured, young and vigorous as I was, of a ready deliverance from them and their cudgels.

A few days after, walking through a street with a young abbé, a neighbour of mine, I was suddenly confronted by the man with the sabre. He recognised me, and mimicking me in a sneering way, 'I am a prince,' he said, 'I am a prince; and as for me I am a poltroon; but let his highness beware of coming back.' He ceased, and I slipped by with downcast look and inwardly thanking him for his discretion. Doubtless those accursed old women had made him ashamed of his credulity. Be this as it may, Piedmontese though he was, he was a good fellow, and never do I think of him without a touch of gratitude; for the adventure was so droll that, were it only to raise a laugh, any other but he would have proclaimed my disgrace. This affair, though not followed by the ill consequences I might well have feared, nevertheless taught me prudence for a long time after.

My stay at Madame de Vercellis' had procured me some acquaintance which I thought

might be serviceable to me, and therefore wished to retain. Among others I sometimes visited a Savoyard abbé, Monsieur Gaime, who was tutor to the Comte de Mellarède's children. He was young, and not much known, but possessed an excellent cultivated understanding, with great probity, and was altogether one of the best men I ever knew. He was incapable of doing me the service I then stood in most need of, not having sufficient interest to procure me a situation; but from him I reaped advantages far more precious, which have been useful to me through life, lessons of pure morality, and maxims of sound judgment. In the successive order of my inclinations and ideas, I had ever been too high or too low—Achilles or Thersites; sometimes a hero, at others a rascal. Monsieur Gaime took pains to make me properly acquainted with myself, without either sparing or giving me too much discouragement. He spoke in advantageous terms of my disposition and talents, adding that he foresaw obstacles which would prevent my profiting by them; thus, according to him, they were to serve less as steps by which I should mount to fortune than as resources which might enable me to exist without one. He gave me a true picture of human life, of which hitherto I had formed but a very erroneous idea, teaching me that a man of understanding, though destined to experience adverse fortune, might by skilful management arrive at happiness; that there was no true felicity without virtue, which was practicable in every situation. He greatly diminished

my admiration of human grandeur by proving that those in a superior situation are neither better nor happier than those they command. One of his maxims has frequently returned to my memory: it was, that if we could truly read the hearts of others we should feel more inclination to descend than rise. This reflection, the truth of which is striking without extravagance, I have found of great utility in the various exigencies of my life, as it tended to make me satisfied with my condition. He gave me the first just conception of relative duties, which my high-flown imagination had ever pictured in extremes, making me sensible that the enthusiasm of sublime virtues is of little use in society; that while endeavouring to rise too high we are in danger of falling; and that a virtuous and uniform discharge of little duties requires as great a degree of fortitude as actions which are called heroic, and would at the same time procure more honour and happiness; that it was infinitely more desirable to possess the lasting esteem of those about us than to excite their admiration.

In properly arranging the various duties between man and man, it was necessary to ascend to principles. The step, too, which I had recently taken, and of which my present situation was the consequence, naturally led us to speak of religion. It will easily be conceived that the honest Monsieur Gaime was, in a great measure, the original of the Savoyard Vicar; prudence only obliging him to deliver his sentiments, on certain points, with more caution and

reserve, and explain himself with less freedom; but his sentiments and counsels were the same, not even excepting his advice to return to my country; all was precisely as I have since given it to the public. Dwelling no longer, therefore, on conversations of which every one may tell the substance, I shall only add that these wise instructions (though they did not produce an immediate effect) were as so many seeds of virtue and religion in my heart which were never rooted out, and only required the fostering care of close friendship to bring to maturity.

Though my conversion was not very sincere, I was affected by his discourses, and, far from being weary, was pleased with them on account of their clearness and simplicity, but above all because his heart seemed interested in what he said. My disposition is naturally tender; I have ever been less attached to people for the good they have really done me than for that they designed to do, and my feelings in this particular have seldom misled me: thus I truly esteemed Monsieur Gaime. I was in a manner his second disciple, which even at that time was of inestimable service in turning me from a propensity to vice into which my idleness was leading me.

One day, when I least expected it, I was sent for by the Comte de la Roque. Having frequently called at his house without being able to speak with him, I grew weary, and, supposing he had either forgotten me or retained some unfavourable impression of me, returned no more; but I was mistaken. He had more than

once witnessed the pleasure I took in fulfilling my duty to his aunt: he had even mentioned it to her, and afterwards spoke of it, when I no longer thought of it myself. He received me graciously, saying that instead of amusing me with useless promises he had sought to place me to advantage; that he had succeeded, and would put me in a way to better my situation, but the rest must depend on myself; that, the family into which he should introduce me being both powerful and esteemed, I should need no other patrons; and though at first, as heretofore, on the footing of a servant, I might be assured that, if my conduct and sentiments were found above that station, I should not long remain in it. The end of this discourse cruelly disappointed the brilliant hopes the beginning had inspired. 'What! for ever a footman?' said I to myself, with a bitterness which confidence presently effaced, for I felt myself too superior to that situation to fear long remaining there.

He took me to the Comte de Gouvon, Master of the Horse to the Queen, and chief of the illustrious House of Solar. The air of dignity conspicuous in this respectable old man rendered the affability with which he received me yet more touching. He questioned me with evident interest, and I replied with sincerity. He then told the Comte de la Roque that my features were agreeable, and promised intellect, which he believed I was not deficient in; but that was not enough, and time must show the rest; after which, turning to me, he said, 'Child, almost

all situations are attended with difficulties in the beginning; yours, however, shall not have too great a portion of them; be prudent, and endeavour to please every one, that will be almost your only employment; for the rest fear nothing, you shall be taken care of.' Immediately after he went to the Marquise de Breil, his daughter-in-law, to whom he presented me, and then to the Abbé de Gouvon, his son. I was elated with this beginning, as I knew enough of the world already to conclude that so much ceremony is not generally used at the reception of a footman. In fact, I was not treated like one. I dined at the steward's table; did not wear a livery; and the Comte de Favria, a giddy youth, having commanded me to get behind his coach, his grandfather ordered that I should get behind no coach, nor follow any one out of the house. Meantime, I waited at table, and did, within-doors, the business of a footman; but I did it, as it were, of my own free will, without being appointed to any particular service; and except writing some letters which were dictated to me, and cutting out some pictures for the Comte de Favria, I was almost the absolute master of my time. This trial of my discretion, which I did not then perceive, was certainly very dangerous, and not very humane; for in this state of idleness I might have contracted vices which I should not otherwise have given way to.

Fortunately, it did not produce that effect; my memory retained the lessons of Monsieur Gaime; they had made an impression on my

heart, so much so that I sometimes escaped from the house of my patron to obtain a repetition of them. I believe those who saw me going out, apparently by stealth, had no conception of my business. Nothing could be more prudent than the advice he gave me, respecting my conduct. My beginning was admirable; so much attention, assiduity, and zeal had charmed every one. The Abbé Gaime advised me to moderate this first ardour, lest I should relax, and that relaxation should be noted. 'Your setting out,' said he, 'is the rule of what will be expected of you; endeavour gradually to increase your attentions, but be cautious how you diminish them.'

As they paid but little attention to my trifling talents, and supposed I possessed no more than nature had given me, there was no appearance, notwithstanding the Comte de Gouvon's promises, of my meeting with any particular consideration. Some objects of more consequence intervened, and I was almost forgotten. The Marquis de Breil, son of the Comte de Gouvon, was then ambassador at Vienna; circumstances had occurred at that court which for some weeks kept the family in continual agitation, and left them no time to think of me. Meantime I had relaxed but little in my attentions, though one object in the family did me both good and harm, making me more secure from exterior dissipation, but less attentive to my duties.

Mademoiselle de Breil was about my own age, tolerably handsome, and very fair-com-

plexioned, with black hair, which notwithstanding gave to her features that air of softness so natural to the flaxen, and which my heart could never resist. The court dress, so becoming to youth, showed her fine figure, her bosom and shoulders, to advantage, and the mourning which the family then wore seemed to add to her beauty. It will be said that a domestic should not take notice of these things. I was certainly to blame, yet I perceived all this, nor was I the only one; the maître d'hôtel and valets de chambre spoke of her sometimes at table with a vulgarity that pained me extremely. My head, however, was not sufficiently turned to allow of my being entirely in love; I did not forget myself or my situation. I loved to see Mademoiselle de Breil; to hear her say anything that marked wit, sense, or good-humour; my ambition, confined to a desire of waiting on her, never exceeded its just rights. At table I was ever attentive to make the most of them; if her footman quitted her chair, I instantly supplied his place: in default of this, I stood facing her, seeking in her eyes what she was about to ask for, and watching the moment to change her plate. What would I not have given to hear her command, to have her look at, or speak the smallest word to me? But no, I had the mortification to be beneath her regard: she did not even perceive I was there. Her brother, nevertheless, who frequently spoke to me while at table, having one day said something which I did not consider obliging, I made him so arch and well-turned an answer that it drew her

attention; she cast her eyes upon me, and this glance was sufficient to fill me with transport. The next day a second occasion presented itself, which I fortunately made use of. A great dinner was given; and I saw, with astonishment, for the first time, the maître d'hôtel waiting at table, with a sword by his side, and wearing his hat. By chance, the discourse turned on the motto of the House of Solar, which, with the arms, was worked in the tapestry, 'Tel fiert qui ne tue pas.' As the Piedmontese are not in general very perfect in the French language, some one found fault with the orthography, saying that in the word *fiert* there should be no *t*.

The old Comte de Gouvon was going to reply, when, happening to cast his eyes on me, he perceived I smiled without daring to say anything; he ordered me to speak my opinion. I then said that I did not think the *t* superfluous, *fiert* being an old French word, not derived from *ferus*, proud, threatening, but from the verb *ferit*, he strikes, he wounds; the motto, therefore, did not appear to mean 'Such a one threatens,' but 'Such a one strikes, who does not kill.'

The whole company fixed their eyes on me, then on each other, without speaking a word; never was a greater degree of astonishment; but what flattered me above all was an air of satisfaction which I perceived on the countenance of Mademoiselle de Breil. This scornful lady deigned to cast on me a second look at least as valuable as the former, and, turning to

her grandfather, appeared to wait with impatience for the praise that was due to me, and which he fully bestowed, with such apparent satisfaction that it was eagerly chorussed by the whole table. This interval was short, but delightful in many respects; it was one of those moments so rarely met with, which replace things in their natural order, and revenge depressed merit for the injuries of fortune. Some minutes after, Mademoiselle de Breil again raised her eyes, desiring me with a voice of timid affability to give her some drink. It will be easily supposed I did not let her wait, but, advancing towards her, I was seized with such a trembling that, having filled the glass too full, I spilt some of the water on her plate, and even on herself. Her brother asked me inconsiderately why I trembled thus. This question increased my confusion, while the face of Mademoiselle de Breil was suffused with a crimson blush.

Here ended the romance, where it may be remarked (as with Madame Basile and others in the continuance of my life) that I was not fortunate in the conclusion of my amours. In vain I placed myself frequently in the antechamber of Madame de Breil; I could not obtain one mark of attention from her daughter. She went in and out without looking at me, nor had I the confidence to raise my eyes to her; I was even so foolishly stupid, that one day, when she dropped her glove in passing by, instead of seizing it and covering it with kisses, as I would gladly have done, I did not dare to quit my place, but suffered it to be taken up by a great booby of a footman,

whom I could willingly have knocked down. To complete my timidity, I perceived that I had not the good fortune to please Madame de Breil; she not only never ordered, but even rejected my services; and, having twice found me in her antechamber, asked me drily 'if I had nothing to do.' I was obliged, therefore, to renounce this dear antechamber. At first it caused me some sorrow, but, other matters intervening, I presently thought no more of it.

The disdain of Madame de Breil was compensated by the kindness of her father-in-law, who at length began to think of me. The evening after the entertainment I have already mentioned, he had a conversation with me that lasted half an hour, which appeared to satisfy him, and absolutely enchanted me. This good man, though not lacking in wit and sense, had less of these than Madame de Vercellis, but possessed more feeling; I therefore succeeded much better with him. He bade me attach myself to his son, the Abbé de Gouvon, who had an esteem for me, which, if I took care to cultivate, might be serviceable in furnishing me with what was necessary to complete their views for my future establishment. The next morning I flew to Monsieur l'Abbé, who did not receive me as a servant, but made me sit by his fireside, and questioned me with great affability. He soon found that my education, which had attempted many things, had completed none: observing especially that I understood something of Latin, he undertook to teach me more, and appointed me to attend him every morning,

commencing on the morrow. Thus, by one of the whimsicalities which have marked the whole course of my life, at once above and below my natural situation, I was pupil and footman in the same house; and, though in servitude, had a preceptor whose birth entitled him to supply that place only to the children of kings.

The Abbé de Gouvon was a younger son, designed by his family for a bishopric, for which reason his studies had been pursued further than is usual with people of quality. He had been sent to the University of Sienna, where he had resided some years, and whence he had brought a good portion of Cruscantism,[1] designing to be that at Turin which the Abbé de Dangeau was formerly at Paris. Being disgusted with theology, he gave himself up to belles-lettres, a circumstance very frequent in Italy with those who have entered the career of prelacy. He had studied the poets, and wrote tolerable Latin and Italian verses; in a word, his taste was calculated to form mine, and give some order to that chaos of crude notions with which my brain was encumbered; but whether my prating had misled him, or that he could not support the trouble of teaching the elementary parts of Latin, he set me at first too high; and I had scarcely translated a few fables of Phædrus before he put me into Virgil, where I could hardly understand anything. It will be seen hereafter that I was destined frequently to learn Latin, but never to attain a right knowledge of it. I

[1] Extreme purity of language. *Cruscante* signifies one who rejects all words not adopted by the Accademia della Crusca.

laboured with fair assiduity, and the Abbé bestowed his attention with a degree of kindness the remembrance of which, even at this time, affects me. I passed the greater part of the morning with him, as much for my own instruction as in his service; not that he ever permitted me to perform any menial office, but to copy or write from his dictation; and my post of secretary was more useful than that of scholar. By this means I not only learned Italian in its utmost purity, but also acquired a taste for literature and some discernment of the great writers, which I could not have obtained from La Tribu's stock, and which were useful to me when I afterwards wrote alone.

This was the period of my life when, without being romantic, I might most reasonably have indulged the hope of preferment. Monsieur l'Abbé, thoroughly pleased with me, expressed his satisfaction to every one, while his father had such a singular liking for me that I was assured by the Comte de Favria that he had spoken of me to the King; even Madame de Breil had laid aside her disdainful looks. In short, I was a general favourite, which gave great jealousy to the other servants, who, seeing me honoured by the instructions of their master's son, were persuaded I should not long remain their equal.

As far as I could judge by some words dropped at random, and which I reflected on afterwards, it appeared to me that the House of Solar, wishing to run the career of embassies, and hoping, perhaps, in time to arrive at the ministry, desired to provide themselves with a

person of merit and talents, who, depending entirely on them, might obtain their confidence, and be ultimately of essential service. This project of the Comte de Gouvon was judicious, magnanimous, and truly worthy of a powerful nobleman, equally provident and generous; but, besides my not seeing at that time its full extent, it was far too rational for my brain, and required too long a servitude. My ridiculous ambition sought for fortune achieved through adventures; and, not finding a woman in all this scheme, it appeared tedious, painful, and melancholy; though I ought rather to have thought it more honourable and certain on this account, the species of merit generally patronised by women being assuredly less worthy than that which I was supposed to possess.

Everything succeeded to my wish. I had obtained, almost forced, the esteem of all. The novitiate was over, and I was universally considered as a young man with flattering prospects, who was not at present in his proper sphere, but was expected soon to reach it; but my place was not assigned me by man, and I was to reach it by very different paths. I now come to one of those characteristic traits which are natural to me, and which it suffices to exhibit to the reader without this reflection.

Though there were at Turin several new converts of my own stamp, I neither liked nor wished to see them, but I had met with some Genevese who were not of this description, and among others a Monsieur Mussard, nicknamed Tord-gueule, a miniature painter, and a distant

relation. This Monsieur Mussard, having learned my situation at the Comte de Gouvon's, came to see me, with another Genevese named Bâcle, who had been my comrade during my apprenticeship. This Bâcle was a very sprightly, amusing young fellow, full of lively sallies, which at his time of life appeared extremely agreeable. At once, then, behold me delighted with Monsieur Bâcle—charmed to such a degree that I found it impossible to quit him. He was shortly to depart for Geneva—what a loss had I to sustain! I felt the whole force of it, and, resolving to make the best use of this precious interval, I determined not to leave him, or, rather, he never quitted me, for my head was not yet sufficiently turned to think of quitting the house without leave; but it was soon perceived that he engrossed my whole time, and he was accordingly forbidden the house. This so incensed me that, forgetting everything but my friend Bâcle, I went neither to the Abbé nor to the Comte, and was no longer to be found at home. I paid no attention to repeated reprimands, and at length was threatened with dismissal. This threat was my ruin, as it suggested the idea that it was not absolutely necessary that Bâcle should depart alone. From that moment I could think of no other pleasure, no other destiny, no other happiness than such a journey, one of ineffable felicity, at the end of which I beheld in fancy Madame de Warens, though at a vast distance; for as to returning to Geneva, it never entered into my imagination. The hills, fields,

brooks, and villages incessantly succeeded each other, with new charms, and this delightful jaunt seemed worthy to absorb my whole existence. Memory recalled, with inexpressible pleasure, how charming the country had appeared in coming hither; what, then, must it be when to the pleasure of independence should be added the company of a good-humoured comrade of my own age and disposition, without any constraint or obligation, but free to go or stay as we pleased? Would it not be madness to sacrifice the prospect of so much felicity to projects of ambition, slow and difficult in their execution, and uncertain in their event, which, even supposing them realised, and in their utmost splendour, were not worth one quarter of an hour of the sweet pleasure and liberty of youth?

Full of these sage fantasies, I conducted myself in such wise that—not, indeed, without some trouble—I got myself dismissed; for, on my return one night, the maître-d'hôtel gave me warning on the part of Monsieur le Comte. This was exactly what I wanted; for feeling, in spite of myself, the extravagance of my conduct, I wished to excuse it by the addition of injustice and ingratitude, thinking thus to throw the blame on others, and sheltering myself under the plea of necessity. I was told the Comte de Favria wished to speak with me the next morning before my departure; but, being sensible that my head was so far turned as to render it possible for me to disobey the injunction, the maître-d'hôtel declined paying the

money designed me, and which certainly I had very ill earned, till after this visit; for, my patrons being unwilling to place me in the situation of a footman, I had not any fixed wages.

The Comte de Favria, though young and giddy, talked to me on this occasion in the most sensible and serious manner—I might add, if it would not be thought vain, with the utmost tenderness. He reminded me, in the most flattering and touching terms, of the cares of his uncle and intentions of his grandfather; and finally, after having drawn in lively colours what I was sacrificing to rush upon ruin, he offered to make my peace, without stipulating any conditions, but that I should no more see the worthless fellow who had seduced me.

It was so apparent that he did not say all this of himself that, notwithstanding my blind stupidity, I powerfully felt the kindness of my good old master; but the dear journey was too firmly printed on my imagination for any consideration to balance the charm. Bereft of understanding, firm to my purpose, I hardened myself against conviction, and arrogantly answered that, as they thought fit to give me warning, I had resolved to take it, and conceived it was now too late to retract, since, whatever might happen to me, I was fully resolved not to be driven a second time from the same house. The young man, justly irritated, bestowed on me some names which I deserved, and, putting me out of his apartment by the shoulders, shut the door upon me. I

departed triumphant, as if I had gained the greatest victory, and fearful of sustaining a second combat, even had the ingratitude to leave the house without thanking the Abbé for his kindness.

To form a just conception of my delirium at that moment, the excess to which my heart is subject to be heated by the most trifling incidents, and the ardour with which my imagination seizes on the object which attracts it, however illusory it may be, should be conceived. At these times plans the most ridiculous, childish, and void of sense flatter my favourite idea, and persuade me that it is reasonable wholly to give myself up to it. Would it be believed that when nearly nineteen any one could be so stupid as to build his hopes of future subsistence on an empty phial? Well, listen.

The Abbé de Gouvon had made me a present, some weeks before, of a very pretty heron fountain,[1] with which I was highly delighted. Playing with this toy, and speaking of our departure, the sage Bâcle and myself thought it might be of infinite advantage, and enable us to lengthen our journey. What in the world was so curious as a heron fountain? This idea was the foundation on which we built our future fortune; we were to assemble around our fountain the country-people in every village we might pass through, when feasting and good cheer would be sure to pour on us abundantly; for we were both firmly persuaded that provisions cost no-

[1] Properly *fontaine de Hiéron*, invented by Hieron of Alexandria and perfected by Nieuwentit.

thing to those who grew and gathered them; and, if they did not feed travellers plentifully, it was through downright ill-nature. We pictured in all parts entertainments and weddings, reckoning that without any expense but wind from our lungs, and the water of our fountain, we should be maintained through Piedmont, Savoy, France, and, indeed, all the world over. There was no end to our projected travels, and we immediately directed our course northward, rather for the pleasure of crossing the Alps than from a supposed necessity of being obliged to stop at any place.

[1731-1732.] Such was the plan on which I set out, abandoning without regret my patron, my preceptor, my studies and hopes, with the almost certain attainment of a fortune, to lead the life of a real vagabond. Farewell to the capital; adieu to the court, ambition, love, the fair, and all the great adventures into which hope had led me during the preceding year! I departed with my fortune and my friend Bâcle, a purse lightly furnished, but a heart overflowing with joy, and only thinking how to enjoy the wandering felicity to which I had suddenly sacrificed my brightest projects.

This extravagant journey was performed almost as agreeably as I had expected, though not exactly on the same plan; not but our fountain highly amused the hostess and servants for some minutes at all the ale-houses where we halted, yet we found it equally necessary to pay on our departure; but that gave us no concern,

as we never thought of depending on it entirely until our money should be expended. An accident spared us that trouble: our fountain was broken near Bramant, and in good time, for we both felt, though without daring to own it to each other, that we began to be weary of it. This misfortune rendered us gayer than ever; we laughed heartily at our heedlessness in having forgotten that our clothes and shoes would wear out, or trusting to renew them by the play of our fountain. We continued our journey as merrily as we had begun it, only drawing faster towards that termination whither our drained purses made it necessary to arrive.

At Chambéri I became pensive; not for the folly I had committed, for never did any one think less anxiously of the past, but on account of the reception I should meet with from Madame de Warens; for I looked on her house as if it were my paternal home. I had written her an account of my reception at the Comte de Gouvon's; she knew my position there, and in congratulating me on my good fortune, had added some wise lessons on the return I ought to make for the kindness with which they treated me. She looked on my fortune as already made, if not destroyed by my own negligence. What then would she say on my arrival? It never entered my mind that she might shut the door against me; but I dreaded the uneasiness I might give her; I dreaded her reproaches, to me more wounding than want. I resolved to bear all in silence, and, if possible, to appease her. I now saw nothing but her in the whole

universe, and to live in disgrace with her was impossible.

I was most concerned about my companion, whom I did not wish to involve in my own troubles, and feared I should not easily get rid of. I prefaced this separation by an affected coldness during the last day's journey. The fellow understood me perfectly; in fact, he was rather scatter-brained than deficient in point of sense. I expected he would have been hurt at my inconstancy, but I was quite mistaken; nothing affected my friend Bâcle, for hardly had we set foot in town, on our arrival in Annecy, before he said, 'You are now at home' —embraced—bade me adieu—turned on his heel, and disappeared; nor have I ever heard of him since. Our acquaintance and friendship lasted altogether for some six weeks, but the consequences will last as long as I shall live.

How did my heart beat as I approached the habitation of Madame de Warens! My legs trembled under me, my eyes were clouded with a mist; I neither saw, heard, nor recollected any one, and was obliged frequently to stop that I might draw breath, and recall my bewildered senses. Was it fear of not obtaining that succour of which I stood in need that agitated me to this degree? At the age I had then attained, does the fear of perishing with hunger give such alarms? No; I declare with as much truth as pride that it was not in the power of interest or indigence, at any period of my life, to expand or contract my heart. In the course of an agitated life, memorable for its

vicissitudes, frequently destitute of an asylum and without bread, I have contemplated with equal indifference both opulence and misery. In want I might have begged or stolen, as others have done, but never could feel distress at being reduced to such need. Few men have grieved so deeply as myself, few have shed so many tears: yet never did poverty, or the fear of falling into it, make me heave a sigh or moisten my eyelids. My soul, steeled against fortune, has only been sensible of real good and evil, which do not depend on her; and it is only when no earthly thing has been lacking to me that I have been the most miserable of mortals.

The first glance of Madame de Warens banished all my fears. My heart quivered at the sound of her voice; I threw myself at her feet, and, in transports of the most lively joy, pressed my lips upon her hand. I am ignorant whether she had received any recent information of me; I discovered but little surprise on her countenance, and no sorrow. 'Poor child!' said she, in an affectionate tone, 'art thou here again? I knew thou wert too young for this journey; I am very glad, however, that it did not turn out so badly as I had feared.' She then made me recount my history; it was not long, and I did it faithfully, suppressing only some incidents, but on the whole neither sparing nor excusing myself.

The question was, where I could lodge. She consulted her maid on this point. I hardly dared to breathe during the deliberation; but when I heard I was to sleep in the house I

could scarce contain my joy, and saw the little bundle I had brought with me carried into my destined apartment with much the same sensation as Saint-Preux saw his chaise put up at Madame de Wolmar's. To complete all, I had the satisfaction to find that this favour was not to be transitory; for, at a moment when they thought me attentive to something else, I heard Madame de Warens say, 'They may talk as they please, but, since Providence has sent him back, I am determined not to abandon him.'

Behold me, then, established at her house; not, however, that I date the happiest days of my life from this period, but this served to prepare me for them. Though that sensibility of heart which enables us truly to enjoy our being is the work of Nature, and perhaps a mere effect of organisation, yet it requires situations to unfold itself, and, without such a concurrence of favourable circumstances, a man born with fine sensibility may go out of the world without ever having been acquainted with himself. This was my case till that time, and such perhaps it might have remained had I never known Madame de Warens, or, even having known her, had I not remained with her long enough to contract that pleasing habit of affectionate sentiments with which she inspired me. I dare affirm that those who only love taste not the sweetest pleasure of life. I am acquainted with another sentiment less impetuous but a thousand times more delightful; sometimes joined with love, but frequently separated from it. This feeling is not simply friendship, it is more

voluptuous, more tender; nor do I imagine it can exist between persons of the same sex—at least I have been truly a friend, if ever man was, and yet never experienced it in that kind. This distinction is not sufficiently clear, but will become so hereafter: sentiments are only describable by their effects.

She inhabited an old house, but large enough to have a handsome spare apartment, which she made her drawing-room. I now occupied this chamber, which was above the passage I have before mentioned as the place of our first meeting. Beyond the brook and gardens was a prospect of the country, which was by no means uninteresting to the young inhabitant, being the first time, since my residence at Bossey, that I had seen verdure before my windows; always shut in by walls, I viewed nothing but roofs and dusty streets. How pleasing then was this novelty! it helped to increase the tenderness of my disposition; for I looked on this charming landscape as an added gift of my dear patroness, who I could almost fancy had placed it there on purpose for me. Peaceably seated, my fancy pursued her amidst the flowers and the verdure; her charms seemed to me confounded with those of spring; my heart, till now contracted, here found means to expand itself, and my sighs exhaled more freely in these bowers.

The magnificence I had been accustomed to at Turin was not to be found at Madame de Warens', but in lieu of it there was neatness, regularity, and a patriarchal abundance which is never attached to ostentation. She had very

St. Albert's College Library

little plate, no porcelain, no game in her kitchen, or foreign wines in her cellar; but both were well furnished, and at every one's service; and her coffee, though served in earthenware cups, was excellent. Whoever came was invited to dine with herself, or at any rate in the house, and never did labourer, messenger, or traveller depart without refreshment. Her family consisted of a pretty chambermaid from Fribourg, named Merceret; a valet from her own country called Claude Anet (of whom I shall speak hereafter), a cook, and two hired chairmen when she went to pay visits, which seldom happened. This was a great deal to be done out of two thousand livres a year; yet, with good management, it might have been sufficient in a country where land is extremely good, and money very scarce. Unfortunately, economy was never her favourite virtue; she contracted debts—paid them—thus her money passed from hand to hand like a weaver's shuttle, and quickly disappeared.

The arrangement of her housekeeping was exactly what I should have chosen, therefore I shared it with satisfaction. I was least pleased with the necessity of remaining long at table. Madame de Warens was much incommoded by the first smell of soup or meat, which brought on a tendency to faint; from this she slowly recovered, talking meantime, and never attempting to eat for the first half-hour. I could have dined thrice in the time, and had indeed finished my meal long before she began; I then ate again for company; and though by this means

I usually dined twice, felt no inconvenience from it. In short, I was the more perfectly at my ease, inasmuch as my happiness was mingled with no anxiety for the future. Not being then acquainted with the state of her finances, I supposed her means were adequate to her expense; and, though I afterwards found the same abundance, yet when instructed in her real situation, finding her income ever anticipated, I could not enjoy it with the same tranquillity. Foresight with me has always embittered enjoyment; in vain I saw the approach of misfortunes, I was never the more likely to avoid them.

From the first moment of our meeting the sweetest familiarity was established between us, and in the same degree it continued during the rest of her life. 'Child' was my name, 'Mamma' was hers, and Child and Mamma we have ever continued, even after years had almost effaced the apparent difference of age between us. I think those names convey an exact idea of our behaviour, the simplicity of our manners, and, above all, the intercourse of our hearts. To me she was the tenderest of mothers, ever preferring my welfare to her own pleasure; and, if the gratification of the senses intermingled with my attachment to her, it was not to change its nature, but only to render it more exquisite, and infatuate me with the charm of having a mother young and handsome, whom I was delighted to caress; I say literally, to caress, for never did it enter into her imagination to deny me the tenderest

maternal kisses and endearments, or into my heart to abuse them. It will be said, at length our intimacy was of a different kind: I confess it; but have patience, that will come in its turn.

The sudden sight of her, on our first interview, was the only truly passionate moment with which she ever inspired me, and even that was principally the work of surprise. My indiscreet glances never dared to peer through the openings of her kerchief, however strongly attracted thither by an ill-concealed fulness of her person. With her I had neither transports nor desires, but remained in a ravishing calm, sensible of a happiness I could not define, and thus could I have passed my whole life, or even eternity, without feeling an instant of weariness. She was the only person with whom I never experienced that want of conversation which to me is so painful to endure. Our tête-a-têtes were rather an inexhaustible chat than conversation, and could only conclude from interruption. So far from finding discourse difficult, I rather thought it a hardship to be silent; unless, when contemplating her projects, she sank into a reverie, when I silently let her meditate, and, gazing on her, was the happiest of men. I had another singular fancy, which was that, without pretending to the favours of a tête-à-tête, I was perpetually seeking occasion to be alone with her, enjoying such opportunities with rapture, which changed to anger when importunate visitors broke in upon us. No matter whether it was man or woman,

I went out murmuring, not being able to remain a third party in her company; then, counting the minutes in her antechamber, I used to curse these eternal visitors, thinking it inconceivable how they could find so much to say, because I had still more.

I never felt the full force of my attachment for her save when I saw her not. When in her presence, I was only content; when absent, my uneasiness reached almost to sadness, and a wish to live with her gave me emotions of tenderness even to tears. Never shall I forget one great holiday, while she was at vespers, when I took a walk out of the city, my heart full of her image, and the ardent longing to pass my life with her. I could easily enough see that at present this was impossible; that the happiness I enjoyed would be of short duration; and this idea gave to my contemplation a tincture of melancholy, which, however, was not gloomy, but tempered with a flattering hope. The ringing of church-bells, which ever affects me, the singing of birds, the fineness of the day, the beauty of the landscape, the scattered country-houses, among which in idea I placed our future dwelling, altogether struck me with an expression so lively, tender, melancholy, and powerful, that I saw myself in ecstasy transported into that happy time and abode, where my heart, possessing all the felicity it could desire, might taste it with raptures inexpressible; nor did a trace of sensuality mingle with these dreams. I never recollect to have enjoyed the future with such force of illusion as at that

time; and what has particularly struck me in the recollection of this reverie is that, when realised, I found my situation exactly as I had imagined it. If ever waking dream had an appearance of a prophetic vision, it was assuredly this: I was only deceived in its imaginary duration; for days, years, and life itself passed ideally in perfect tranquillity, while the reality lasted but a moment. Alas! my most durable happiness was but as a dream; its accomplishment was followed swiftly by a rude awakening.

I know not when I should end if I were to enter into a detail of all the follies that affection for this dear Mamma made me commit when not in her presence. How often have I kissed the bed on a supposition that she had slept there; the curtains and all the furniture of my chamber, in thinking they were hers, and that her charming hand had touched them; nay, the floor itself, when I considered she had walked there! Sometimes even in her presence extravagances escaped me, which only the most violent passion seemed capable of inspiring. One day at table, when she had put a morsel into her mouth, I cried out that I had seen a hair upon it: she cast it out again upon her plate; I took it up eagerly and swallowed it. In a word, there was but one difference, though an essential one, to distinguish me from an absolute lover, and that particular renders my situation almost inconceivable.

I had returned from Italy, not altogether as I went, but as, perhaps, never at my age any one came back. I brought back from thence, not

my virginity, but my *pucelage*. I had felt the progress of years; my troublesome constitution at last declared itself; and its first eruption, extremely involuntary, gave me apprehensions for my health which paint better than anything else the innocence in which I had lived till that time. But my fears being soon removed, I learned this dangerous supplement which diverts the course of nature, and saves young people of my humour many disorders at the expense of their health, their vigour, and sometimes their life. This vice, which shame and timidity find so convenient, has besides great enticements for lively imaginations; that is, to dispose in a manner at will of the whole sex, and to make the beauties which tempt them serve their pleasures without the necessity of obtaining their consent. Seduced by this fatal advantage, I laboured to destroy the sound constitution nature had given me, and to which I had given time to form itself thoroughly and soundly. My local situation should likewise be considered —living with a pretty woman, cherishing her image in the bottom of my heart, seeing her during the whole day, at night surrounded with objects that recalled her incessantly to my remembrance, and sleeping in the bed where I knew she had slept. What stimulants! Who can read this without supposing me on the brink of the grave! But quite the contrary; that which might have ruined me acted as a preservative, at least for a time. Intoxicated with the charm of living with her, with the ardent desire of passing my life there,

absent or present I saw in her a tender mother, a beloved sister, a delightful friend, but nothing more; meantime, her image filled my heart, and left room for no other object. For me, she was the only woman in the world. The extreme tenderness with which she inspired me excluded every other woman from my consideration, and preserved me from the whole sex; in a word, I was virtuous, because I loved her. Let these particulars, which I recount but indifferently, be considered, and then let any one judge what kind of attachment I had for her; for my part, all I can say is, that if it hitherto appears extraordinary, it will appear much more so in the sequel.

My time passed in the most agreeable manner, though occupied in a way which was by no means calculated to please me; such as having projects to digest, bills to write fair, receipts to transcribe, herbs to pick, drugs to pound, or distillations to attend; and in the midst of all this came crowds of travellers, beggars, and visitors of all denominations. Sometimes it was necessary to converse at the same time with a soldier, an apothecary, a canon, a fine lady, and a lay brother. I grumbled, swore, and wished all this troublesome medley at the devil, while she seemed to enjoy it, laughing at my chagrin till the tears ran down her cheeks. What excited her mirth still more was to see that my anger was increased by not being able myself to refrain from laughter. These little intervals, in which I enjoyed the pleasure of grumbling, were charming; and if, during the dispute,

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another importunate visitor arrived, she would add to her amusement by maliciously prolonging the visit, meantime casting glances at me for which I could almost have beaten her: nor could she without difficulty refrain from laughter on seeing my constrained politeness, though every moment glancing at her the look of a fury; while, even in spite of myself, I thought the scene truly diverting.

All this, without being pleasing in itself, contributed to amuse, because it made up a part of a life which I thought delightful. Nothing that was performed around me, nothing that I was obliged to do, suited my taste, but everything suited my heart; and I believe at length I should have liked the study of medicine, had not my natural distaste for it perpetually engaged us in whimsical scenes, that prevented my thinking of it in a serious light. It was perhaps the first time that this art produced mirth. I pretended to distinguish a medical book by its smell; and, what was more diverting, was seldom mistaken. She made me taste the most nauseous drugs: in vain I ran, or endeavoured to defend myself; spite of resistance or wry faces, spite of my struggles, or even of my teeth, when I saw her charming fingers approach my mouth, I must needs open it and suck. When shut up in an apartment with all her medical apparatus, any one to have heard us running and shouting amidst peals of laughter would rather have imagined that we were acting a farce than preparing opiates or elixirs.

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My time, however, was not entirely passed in these fooleries. In the apartment which I occupied I found a few books—there were the *Spectator*, Puffendorf, Saint-Évremond, and the *Henriade*. Though I had not my old passion for books, yet to pass the time I read parts of these. The *Spectator* was particularly pleasing and serviceable to me. The Abbé de Gouvon had taught me to read less eagerly, and with a greater degree of attention, which rendered my studies more serviceable. I accustomed myself to reflect on elocution and the elegance of composition, exercising myself in discerning pure French from my provincial idiom. For example, I corrected an orthographical fault (which I had in common with all Genevese) by these two lines of the *Henriade*:

> Soit qu'un ancien respect pour le sang de leurs maîtres
> Parlât encore pour lui dans le cœur de ces traîtres.

I was struck with the word *parlât*, and found a *t* was necessary to form the third person of the subjunctive, whereas I had always written and pronounced it *parla*, as in the perfect of the indicative.

Sometimes I chatted to Mamma about my studies; sometimes I read to her, in which I found great satisfaction; and, as I endeavoured to read well, it was extremely serviceable to me. I have already observed that her mind was cultivated; her understanding was at this time in its meridian. Several people of learning having been assiduous to ingratiate themselves, had taught her to distinguish works of merit. Her

taste, if I may so express myself, was rather Protestant, ever speaking warmly of Bayle, and highly esteeming Saint-Evremond, though the latter was long since almost forgotten in France; but this did not prevent her having a taste for good literature, or expressing her opinions with elegance. She had been brought up with polite company, and coming young to Savoy, by associating with people of the best fashion, had lost the affected manners of the Vaud country, where the ladies mistake wit for sense, and only speak in epigram.

Though she had seen the Court but superficially, that glance was sufficient to give her a competent idea of it; and, notwithstanding secret jealousies and the murmurs excited by her conduct and running in debt, she ever preserved friends there, and never lost her pension. She knew the world, and was possessed of sense and reflection to make her experience useful. This was her favourite theme in our conversations, and was directly opposite to my chimerical ideas, though the kind of instruction I particularly had occasion for. We read La Bruyère together; he pleased her more than La Rochefoucauld, who is a dull, melancholy author, particularly to youth, who are not fond of contemplating man as he really is. In moralising, the train of her discourse was sometimes vague and wandering; but by kissing her lips or hand from time to time, I was easily consoled, and never found her remarks too long or wearisome.

This life was too delightful to be lasting. I felt this, and the uneasiness that thought gave

me was the only thing that disturbed my enjoyment. Even in playfulness Mamma studied my disposition, observed and interrogated me, forming projects for my future fortune which I could readily have dispensed with. Happily it was not sufficient to know my disposition, inclinations, and talents; it was likewise necessary to find a situation in which they would be useful, and this was not the work of a day. Even the prejudices this good woman had conceived in favour of my merit put off the time of calling it into action, by rendering her more difficult in the choice of means; thus, thanks to the good opinion she entertained of me, everything answered to my wish; but a change was inevitable, and thenceforth farewell to tranquillity.

One of her relations, named Monsieur d'Aubonne, came to see her; a man of great understanding and intrigue, being, like her, fond of projects, though careful not to ruin himself by them—a species of adventurer. He had offered Cardinal Fleury a very compact plan for a lottery, which, however, had not been approved of, and he was now going to propose it to the Court of Turin, where it was accepted and put into execution. He remained some time at Annecy, where he fell in love with the Intendant's lady, who was very amiable, much to my taste, and the only person whom I saw with pleasure at Mamma's house. Monsieur d'Aubonne saw me. I was strongly recommended by his relation. He promised, therefore, to question and see what I was fit for, and, if he found me capable, to seek me a situation

Madame de Warens sent me to him on two or three successive mornings, under pretence of messages, without acquainting me with her intention. He spoke to me gaily, on various subjects, without any appearance of affectation or observation; his familiarity presently set me talking, which by his cheerful and jesting manner he encouraged without restraint. I was absolutely charmed with him. The result of his observations was that, notwithstanding the animation of my countenance and promising exterior, if not absolutely silly, I was a lad of very little sense, and without original ideas or learning; in fine, very ignorant in all respects, and if I could arrive at being curate of some village, it was the utmost honour I ought ever to aspire to. Such was the account he gave of me to Madame de Warens. This was not the first time such an opinion had been formed of me, neither was it the last, the judgment of Monsieur Masseron having been repeatedly confirmed.

The cause of these opinions is too much connected with my character not to need a particular explanation; for it will not be supposed that I can in conscience subscribe to them; and with all possible impartiality, whatever Messieurs Masseron, d'Aubonne, and many others may have said, I cannot help contradicting them.

Two things, very opposite, unite in me, and in a manner which I cannot myself conceive. My temperament is extremely ardent, my passions lively and impetuous, yet my ideas are

produced slowly, with entanglement, and fail to offer themselves at the proper moment. It might be said my heart and understanding do not belong to the same individual. A sentiment takes possession of my soul with the rapidity of lightning, but instead of illuminating, it dazzles and confounds me; I feel all, but see nothing; I am excited, yet stupid; to think, I must be cool. What is astonishing, my conception is clear and penetrating, if not hurried. I can make excellent impromptus at leisure, but on the instant could never say or do anything worth notice. I could hold a tolerable conversation by the post, as they say the Spaniards play at chess; and when I read that anecdote of a Duke of Savoy, who turned himself round, while on the road, to cry out, 'À votre gorge, marchand de Paris!'[1] I said, 'Here am I.'

This slowness of thought, joined to vivacity of feeling, I am not only sensible of in conversation, but even alone. When I write, my ideas are arranged with the utmost difficulty. They whirl about and ferment till they discompose, heat, and bring on a palpitation; during this state of agitation I see nothing properly, cannot write a single word, and must wait till it is over. Insensibly the agitation subsides, the chaos acquires form, and each circumstance takes its proper place. Have you never seen an opera in Italy? During the changes of scene everything

[1] 'At thy throat, Paris merchant!' The speaker was Charles-Emmanuel I., who visited the court of Henri IV. in 1599.

is in confusion, the decorations are intermingled, there is a dragging to and fro, and one would suppose that all would be overthrown; yet by little and little everything is arranged, nothing appears wanting, and we feel surprised to see the tumult succeeded by the most delightful spectacle. This is a resemblance of what passes in my brain when I attempt to write. Had I always waited till that confusion was past, and then painted, in their natural beauties, the objects that had presented themselves, few authors would have surpassed me.

Thence arises the extreme difficulty I find in writing; my manuscripts—blotted, scratched, and scarcely legible—attest the trouble they cost me; nor is there one of them that I have not been obliged to transcribe four or five times before it went to press. Never could I do anything when placed at a table, pen in hand; it must be while walking among the rocks or in the woods. It is at night in my bed, when sleep deserts me, that I compose—it may be judged how slowly, particularly for a man who has not the advantage of verbal memory, and never in his life could retain by heart six verses. Some of my periods I have turned and re-turned in my head five or six nights before they were fit to be put to paper. Thus it is that I succeed better in works that require laborious attention than those that appear more trivial, such as letters, in which I could never succeed, and being obliged to write one is to me a kind of punishment; nor can I in this way express my thoughts on the most trivial subjects save at the

cost of hours of fatigue. If I write immediately what strikes me, my letter is without beginning or end—a long, confused string of expressions, which, when read, can hardly be understood.

It is not only painful to me to give language to ideas, but even to receive them. I have studied mankind, and think myself a tolerable observer, yet I know nothing from what I see, but all from what I remember; nor have I any clear understanding except in my recollections. From all that is said or done, from all that passes in my presence, I feel nothing, conceive nothing, the exterior sign being all that strikes me. Afterwards the whole returns to my remembrance; I recollect the place, the time, the manner, look, and gesture—not a circumstance escapes me; it is then, from what has been done or said, that I imagine what has been thought, and I have rarely found myself mistaken.

So little master of my understanding when alone, let any one judge what I must be in conversation, where to speak with any degree of ease you must think of a thousand things at the same time. The bare idea of so many rules and observances, some of which I should be certain to forget, is sufficient to intimidate me. Nor can I comprehend how people can have the confidence to converse in large companies, where each word must pass in review before so many, and where it would be requisite to know their several characters and histories to avoid saying what might give offence. In this particular, those who frequent the world have a great advantage, as they know better where to

be silent, and can speak with greater confidence; yet even they sometimes let fall absurdities. In what predicament, then, must he be who drops as it were from the clouds? It is almost impossible he should speak for a few minutes with impunity. In a tête-à-tête there is a still worse inconvenience; that is, the necessity of talking perpetually—at least the necessity of answering when spoken to, and keeping up the conversation when the other is silent. This insupportable constraint is alone sufficient to disgust me with society; for I cannot form an idea of a greater torment than being obliged to speak continually and to the point. I know not whether it proceeds from my mortal hatred to all constraint; but, if I am obliged to speak, I infallibly talk nonsense.

What is still worse, instead of learning how to be silent when I have absolutely nothing to say, it is generally at such times that I have a violent inclination; and endeavouring to pay my debt of conversation as speedily as possible, I hastily gabble a number of words without ideas, happy when they only chance to mean nothing. Thus endeavouring to conquer or hide my incapacity, I rarely fail to show it. Amongst a thousand examples that I might cite, I take one, not from my younger years, but from the time when I had had long experience of the world, and had adopted, if that were possible, its easy style and manner. I was one evening seated between two ladies of fashion, and a gentleman whom I may be permitted to name—Monsieur le Duc de Gontaut. There

was no one else present, and I strove to supply a few words of conversation—heaven knows what—in a company of four, three of whom assuredly needed nothing of the kind from me. The lady of the house bade the servant bring her an opiate, which she took twice daily for an ailment of the stomach. Seeing her swallow it with a wry face, the other lady said with a laugh, 'Is that Monsieur Tronchin's opiate?'[1] 'I think not,' answered the former, in the same tone. 'I think it is scarcely much better,' gallantly added the fine-witted Rousseau. This produced a sudden pause, no one spoke or even smiled, and the conversation immediately took a different turn. Before other women this ill-timed speech might have passed as a trifling jest, but addressed to one who was too charming to have altogether escaped the notice of idle gossipers—one whom certainly I had no wish to offend—it was terrible; and I imagine that both the male and female auditor had some difficulty in repressing their anger. Such are the shafts of wit that I launch through a desire to talk when I have nothing to say. Not readily shall I forget this one; for, besides being memorable in itself, its results but too often recall it to my mind.

I think I have said enough to show that, though not a fool, I have frequently passed for one, even among people capable of judging;

[1] Théodore Tronchin (1709-1781) was a celebrated physician, skilful in the treatment of female complaints. The lady who took the opiate on this occasion was Madame de Luxembourg; the other was Madame de Mirepoix.

this was the more vexatious, as my physiognomy and eyes promised otherwise, and, expectation being frustrated, my stupidity appeared the more shocking. This detail, which a particular occasion gave birth to, will not be useless in the sequel, being a key to many of my actions which might otherwise appear unaccountable, and have been attributed to an unsociable humour I do not possess. I would love society as much as any man, were I not certain to exhibit myself in it, not only disadvantageously, but totally different from what I really am. The plan I have adopted of writing and retirement is what exactly suits me. Had I been present, my worth would never have been known, no one would even have suspected it; thus it was with Madame Dupin, a woman of sense, in whose house I lived for several years; indeed, she has often since owned it to me. On the whole, however, this rule may be liable to some exceptions, and I shall return to the subject hereafter.

The estimate of my talents thus fixed, the situation I was capable of premised, the question only remained how to render me capable of fulfilling my destined vocation. The principal difficulty was that my education was incomplete, and that I did not know Latin enough for a priest. Madame de Warens determined to have me taught for some time at the seminary, and accordingly spoke of it to the superior, who was a Lazarist, called Monsieur Gros, a good-natured little fellow, half blind, meagre, grey-haired, the most sharp-witted and the least

pedantic of any Lazarist I ever knew—which, in fact, is saying no great matter.

He frequently visited Mamma, who entertained, caressed, and made much of him, letting him sometimes lace her stays, an office he was willing enough to perform. While thus employed she would run about the room, this way or that, as occasion happened to call her. Drawn by the lace, Monsieur le Supérieur followed grumbling, and repeating at every moment, 'Pray, madam, do stand still,' the whole forming a scene truly diverting.

Monsieur Gros willingly assented to Mamma's project, and for a very moderate pension charged himself with the care of instructing me. The consent of the bishop was all that remained necessary, who not only granted it, but offered to pay the pension, permitting me to retain the secular habit till they could judge by a trial what success might be hoped for.

What a change! but I was obliged to submit; though I went to the seminary with about the same spirits as if they had been taking me to execution. What a melancholy abode—especially for one who left the house of a pretty woman! I carried one book with me that I had begged Mamma to lend me, and found it a capital resource. It will not be easily conjectured what kind of book this was—it was a music-book. Among the talents she had cultivated, music had not been forgotten; she had a tolerably good voice, sang agreeably, and played on the harpsichord. She had taken the pains to give me some lessons in singing, though

obliged to begin at the rudiments, for I hardly knew the music of our psalms. Eight or ten interrupted lessons, far from putting me in a condition to read the notation, did not teach me half the notes; notwithstanding, I had such a passion for the art, that I determined to exercise myself alone. The book I took was not of the most easy kind; it contained the cantatas of Clérambault. It may be conceived with what attention and perseverance I studied when I inform my reader that, without knowing anything of transposition or quantity, I contrived to read and sing with tolerable correctness the first air in the cantata of 'Alpheus and Arethusa'; it is true this air is so justly set that it is only necessary to recite the verses in their due measure in order to catch the music.

There was at the seminary a cursed Lazarist, who, by undertaking to teach me Latin, made me detest it. His hair was coarse, black, and greasy, his face like those formed in gingerbread; he had the voice of a buffalo, the countenance of an owl, and the bristles of a boar in lieu of a beard; his smile was sardonic, and his limbs played like those of a puppet moved by wires. I have forgotten his odious name, but the remembrance of his frightful hypocritical countenance remains with me, though hardly can I recollect it without trembling. I call to mind our meeting in the gallery, when he graciously advanced his filthy square cap as a sign for me to enter his apartment, more dismal in my apprehension than a dungeon. Let any one judge the contrast

between my present master and the courtly abbé.

Had I remained two months at the mercy of this monster, I am certain my head could not have sustained it; but the good Monsieur Gros, perceiving that I was melancholy, grew thin, and did not eat my victuals, guessed the cause of my uneasiness (which indeed was not very difficult), and, taking me from the claws of this beast, by another yet more striking contrast, placed me with the gentlest of men, a young Faucigneran abbé named Monsieur Gâtier, who studied at the seminary, and out of complaisance for Monsieur Gros, and probably out of humanity to myself, spared some time from the prosecution of his own studies in order to direct mine. Never did I see a more pleasing countenance than that of Monsieur Gâtier. He was fair-complexioned, his beard rather inclined to red, his behaviour, like that of the generality of his countrymen—who, under a coarseness of countenance, conceal much understanding—marked in him a truly sensible and affectionate soul. In his large blue eyes there was a mixture of softness, tenderness, and melancholy, which made it impossible to see him without feeling one's-self interested. From the looks and manner of this young abbé he might have been supposed to have foreseen his destiny, and that he was born to be unhappy.

His disposition did not belie his physiognomy. Full of patience and complaisance, he rather appeared to study with than instruct me. So much was not necessary to make me love him,

his predecessor having rendered that very easy; yet, notwithstanding all the time he bestowed on me, notwithstanding our mutual good inclinations, and that his plan of teaching was excellent, with much labour I made little progress. It is very singular that, with a clear conception, I could never learn much from masters except my father and Monsieur Lambercier; the little I know besides I have learned alone, as will be seen hereafter. My spirit, impatient of every species of constraint, cannot submit to the law of the moment; even the fear of not learning prevents my being attentive, and a dread of wearying those who teach makes me feign to understand them; thus they proceed faster than I comprehend, and the conclusion is I learn nothing. My understanding must take its own time, and cannot submit to that of another.

The time for ordination being arrived, Monsieur Gâtier returned to his province as deacon, bearing with him my gratitude, attachment, and sorrow for his loss. The prayers I offered for him were no more answered than those I offered for myself. Some years after I learned that, being vicar of a parish, a young girl was with child by him, being the only one (though he possessed a very tender heart) with whom he was ever in love. This was a dreadful scandal in a diocese severely governed, where the priests (being under good regulation) ought never to have children — except by married women. Having infringed this politic law, he was put in prison, defamed, and driven from his benefice. I know not whether it was ever after in his

power to re-establish his affairs; but the remembrance of his misfortunes, which were deeply engraven on my heart, struck me when I wrote *Émile*, and, uniting Monsieur Gâtier with Monsieur Gaime, I formed from these two worthy priests the character of the Savoyard Vicar, and flatter myself that the imitation has not dishonoured the originals.

While I was at the seminary, Monsieur d'Aubonne was obliged to quit Annecy, Monsieur l'Intendant being displeased that he made love to his wife, which was acting like a dog in the manger, for though Madame Corvesi was amiable, he lived very ill with her; his ultramontane tastes made her unserviceable to him, and he treated her with such brutality that a separation was talked of. Monsieur Corvesi, by repeated oppressions, at length procured a dismissal from his employment; he was a most disagreeable man; a mole could not be blacker nor an owl more knavish. It is said that the natives of Provence revenge themselves on their enemies by songs. Monsieur d'Aubonne revenged himself on his by a comedy, which he sent to Madame de Warens, who showed it to me. I was pleased with it, and immediately conceived the idea of writing one, to try whether I was so silly as the author had pronounced me. This project was not executed till I went to Chambéri, where I wrote *L'Amant de lui-même*. Thus, when I said in the preface to that piece, 'it was written at eighteen,' I cut off a few years.

Nearly about this time an event happened,

not very important in itself, but whose consequence affected me, and made a noise in the world when I had forgotten it. Once a week I was permitted to go abroad; it is not necessary to say what use I made of this liberty. Being one Sunday at Mamma's, a building belonging to the Cordeliers, which joined her house, took fire; this building, which contained their oven, being full of dry fagots, blazed violently and greatly endangered the house; for the wind happening to drive the flames that way, it was covered with them. The furniture, therefore, was hastily got out and carried into the garden which fronted the windows of the room I had formerly occupied, on the other side of the before-mentioned brook. I was so alarmed that I threw indiscriminately everything that came to hand out of the window, even to a large stone mortar, which at another time I should have found it difficult to remove, and should have thrown a handsome looking-glass after it, had not some one prevented me. The good bishop, who that day was visiting Mamma, did not remain idle; he took her into the garden, where they went to prayers with the rest that were assembled there, and where, some time afterwards, I found them on their knees, and presently joined them. While the good man was at his devotions the wind changed, so suddenly and critically, that the flames which had covered the house, and began to enter the windows, were carried to the other side of the court, and the house received no damage. Two years after, Monsieur de Bernex being dead, the

Antonines, his former brethren, began to collect anecdotes which might serve as arguments for his beatification; at the desire of Père Boudet, I joined to these an attestation of what I have just related, in doing which, though I attested no more than the truth, I certainly acted ill, in that I described it as though it had been a miracle. I had seen the bishop in prayer, and had likewise seen the wind change during that prayer, and even much to the purpose, all this I could certify truly; but that one of these facts was the cause of the other I ought not to have attested, because it is what I could not possibly be assured of. Thus much I may say, that as far as I can recollect what my ideas were at that time, I was sincerely a Catholic, and acted in good faith. Love of the marvellous is natural to the human heart; my veneration for the virtuous prelate, and secret pride in having, perhaps, contributed to the miracle, all helped to seduce me; and certainly, if this miracle was the effect of ardent prayer, I had a right to claim a share of the merit.

More than thirty years after, when I published the *Lettres de la Montagne*, Monsieur Fréron (I know not by what means) discovered this attestation, and made use of it in his paper. I must confess the discovery was very well timed, and appeared very diverting, even to me.

I was destined to be the outcast of every condition; for, notwithstanding Monsieur Gâtier gave the most favourable account he possibly could of my studies, they plainly saw the improvement I received bore no proportion to the

pains taken to instruct me, which was no encouragement to continue them. The bishop and superior, therefore, were disheartened, and I was sent back to Madame de Warens, as a subject not even fit to make a priest of; but as they allowed at the same time that I was a tolerably good lad, and far from being vicious, this account counterbalanced the former, and determined her not to abandon me.

I carried back in triumph her music-book, which had been so useful to me, the air of 'Alpheus and Arethusa' being almost all I had learned at the seminary. My predilection for this art started the idea of making a musician of me. A convenient opportunity offered: once a week, at least, she had a concert at her house, and the music-master from the cathedral, who directed this little band, came frequently to see her. This was a Parisian named Monsieur le Maître, a good composer, very lively, gay, young, well-made, of little understanding, but, upon the whole, a good sort of man. Mamma made us acquainted; I attached myself to him, and he seemed not displeased with me. A pension was talked of, and agreed on; in short, I went home with him, and passed the winter the more agreeably at his chambers, as they were not above twenty paces distant from Madame de Warens', where we frequently supped together.

It may easily be supposed that this situation, ever gay, and singing with the musicians and children of the choir, was more pleasing to me than the seminary and fathers of Saint-Lazare.

This life, though free, was regular; here I learned to prize independence, but never to abuse it. For six whole months I never once went out except to see Mamma, or to church, nor had I any inclination to it. This interval is one of those in which I enjoyed the greatest satisfaction, and which I have ever recollected with pleasure. Among the various situations I have been placed in, some were marked with such an idea of virtuous satisfaction, that the bare remembrance affects me as if they were yet present. I vividly recollect the time, the place, the persons, and even the temperature and odour of the air, while the lively idea of a certain local impression peculiar to those times transports me back again to the very spot; for example, all that was repeated at our meetings, all that was sung in the choir, everything that passed there—the beautiful and noble vestments of the canons, the chasubles of the priests, the mitres of the singers, the persons of the musicians, an old lame carpenter who played the counter-bass, a little fair abbé who performed on the violin, the ragged cassock which Monsieur le Maître (after taking off his sword) used to put over his secular habit, and the fine surplice with which he covered the rags of the former when he went to the choir, the pride with which I bore my little flute, and seated myself in the orchestra, to assist in a little recitative which Monsieur le Maître had composed on purpose for me, the good dinner that afterwards awaited us, and the good appetites we carried to it. This concourse of objects, strongly retraced in my memory,

has charmed me a hundred times as much, or perhaps more, than ever the reality had done. I have always preserved an affection for a certain air of the 'Conditor alme siderum,' because one Sunday in Advent I heard that hymn sung on the steps of the cathedral (according to the custom of that place) as I lay in bed before daybreak. Mademoiselle Merceret, Mamma's chamber-maid, knew something of music; I shall never forget a little piece that Monsieur le Maître made me sing with her, and which her mistress listened to with great satisfaction;—in a word, every particular, even down to the good servant Perrine, whom the boys of the choir took such delight in teasing. The recollections of these times of happiness and innocence frequently returning to my mind, both ravish and affect me.

I lived at Annecy nearly a year without the least reproach, giving universal satisfaction. Since my departure from Turin I had been guilty of no folly, nor committed any while under the eye of Mamma. She was my conductor, and ever led me right; my attachment for her became my only passion; and, what proves it was not a giddy one, my heart and understanding were in unison. It is true that a single sentiment, absorbing all my faculties, put me out of a capacity for learning even music; but this was not my fault, since to the strongest inclination I added the utmost assiduity. I was inattentive and thoughtful; I sighed; how could I help it? Nothing was wanting towards my progress that depended on me; meantime, it

only required a subject that might inspire me to occasion the commission of new follies: that subject presented itself, chance arranged it, and (as will be seen hereafter) my inconsiderate head gave in to it.

One evening, in the month of February, when it was very cold, being all seated round the fire, we heard some one knock at the street door. Perrine took a light, went down and opened it. A young man entering, came up-stairs, presented himself with an easy air, and, making Monsieur le Maitre a short but well-turned compliment, announced himself as a French musician, constrained by the state of his finances to take this liberty. The heart of the good Le Maître leaped at the name of a French musician, for he passionately loved both his country and profession; he therefore offered the young traveller the lodging which he appeared to stand much in need of, and which he accepted without much ceremony. I observed him while he was chatting and warming himself before supper. He was short and square-built, having some fault in his shape, though without any particular deformity. He had (if I may so express myself) an appearance of being hunchbacked, with flat shoulders, and I think he limped. He wore a black coat, rather worn than old, which hung in tatters; a very fine but dirty shirt; frayed ruffles; a pair of gaiters so large that he could have put both his legs into either of them; and, to secure himself from the snow, a little hat, only fit to be carried under the arm. In all this whimsical equipage there was, however,

something noble which his manners did not belie. His countenance was expressive and agreeable, and he spoke with facility, though hardly with modesty. In short, everything about him bore the marks of a young debauchee, who did not crave assistance like a beggar, but as a thoughtless madcap. He told us his name was Venture de Villeneuve, that he came from Paris, had lost his way, and, seeming to forget that he had announced himself as a musician, added that he was going to Grenoble to see a relation who was a member of parliament.

During supper we talked of music, on which subject he spoke well. He knew all the great virtuosi, all the celebrated works, all the actors, actresses, pretty women, and nobility. In short, nothing was mentioned that he did not seem to be thoroughly acquainted with, though no sooner was any topic started than by some drollery, which set every one a-laughing, he made them forget what had been said. This was on a Saturday; the next day there was to be music at the cathedral. Monsieur le Maître asked him if he would sing there. 'Very willingly.' 'What part would he choose?' 'The counter-tenor'; and immediately began speaking of other things. Before he went to church they offered him his part to peruse, but he did not even look at it. This gasconnade surprised Le Maître. 'You'll see,' said he, whispering to me, 'that he does not know a single note.' I replied, 'I fear it very much.' I followed them into the church, but was extremely uneasy, and when they began my

heart beat violently, so much was I interested in his behalf.

I was presently reassured. He sang his two recitatives with all imaginable taste and judgment; and, what was yet more, with a very agreeable voice. I never enjoyed a more pleasing surprise. After mass Monsieur Venture received the highest compliments from the canons and musicians, whom he answered playfully, though with much gracefulness. Monsieur le Maître embraced him heartily; I did the same; he saw I was rejoiced at his success, and appeared pleased at my satisfaction.

It will easily be surmised that after having been delighted with Monsieur Bâcle, who at the best was a rather commonplace man, I should be infatuated with Monsieur Venture, who had education, wit, talents, and a knowledge of the world, and might be called an agreeable rake. This was exactly what happened, and would, I believe, have happened to any young man in my place, especially supposing him possessed of better judgment to distinguish merit, and more propensity to be engaged by it; for Venture doubtless possessed a considerable share, and one in particular, very rare at his age, namely, that of never being in haste to display his talents. It is true, he boasted of many things he did not understand, but of those that he knew, which were very numerous, he said nothing, patiently waiting some occasion to display them, which he then did with ease, though without forwardness, and this gave them a striking effect. As there was

ever some intermission between the proofs of his various abilities, it was impossible to conjecture whether he had ever discovered all. Playful, giddy, inexhaustible, delightful in conversation, ever smiling but never laughing, he repeated the rudest things in the most elegant manner. Even the most modest women were astonished at what they endured from him: it was in vain that they strove to feel angry; they could not assume the appearance of it. He lacked but one quality—the art of conquering female virtue; but those who possessed that art would have found him an excellent companion. It would be extraordinary that with so many agreeable talents, in a country where they are so well understood and so much admired, he should long remain a mere musician.

My attachment to Monsieur Venture, more reasonable in its cause, was also less extravagant in its effects, though more lively and durable than that I had conceived for Monsieur Bâcle. I loved to see him, to hear him; all his actions appeared charming, everything he said was an oracle to me, but the enchantment did not extend so far as to disable me from quitting him. Close by I had a good protector against such excess. Besides, though believing that his maxims held good for one of his own character, I felt that they were unsuited to mine: I needed another kind of delight, of which I dared not speak to him, confident as I was that he would have made a jest of it. Nevertheless, I would willingly have formed a link of union between these two attachments. I spoke of him with

transport to Mamma; Le Maître likewise spoke in his praise; and she consented that we should bring him to her house. This interview did not succeed. He thought her affected; she found him a libertine, and, alarmed that I had formed such an ill acquaintance, not only forbade me bringing him there again, but likewise painted so vividly the danger I ran with this young man, that I became a little more circumspect in giving in to the attachment; and very happily, both for my manners and intellect, we were soon separated.

Monsieur le Maître, like most of his profession, loved good wine. At table he was moderate, but when busy in his study he must drink. His maid was so well acquainted with this humour that no sooner had he prepared his paper to compose, and taken his violoncello, than the jug and glass arrived, and the former was replenished from time to time; thus, without being ever absolutely intoxicated, he was usually in a state of elevation. This was really unfortunate, for he had a good heart, and was so playful that Mamma used to call him *the kitten*. Unhappily, he loved his profession, laboured much and drank proportionately, which injured his health, and at length soured his temper. Sometimes he was gloomy and easily offended, though incapable of rudeness, or giving offence to any one, for never did he utter an evil word, even to the boys of the choir; on the other hand, he would not suffer another to offend him, which was but just. The misfortune was that, having little understanding, he did not

properly discriminate, and was often angry without cause.

The Chapter of Geneva, where so many princes and bishops formerly thought it an honour to be seated, though in exile it lost its ancient splendour, has retained its pride. To be admitted, you must either be a gentleman by birth or doctor of the Sorbonne. If there be a pardonable pride, after that derived from personal merit, it is doubtless that arising from birth, though, in general, priests having laymen in their service treat them with sufficient haughtiness, and thus the canons often behaved to poor Le Maître. The chanter, in particular, who was called the Abbé de Vidonne, in other respects a well-behaved man, but too full of his nobility, did not always show him the attention his talents merited. Monsieur le Maître could not bear these indignities patiently; and this year, during Passion Week, they had a more serious dispute than ordinary. At an institution dinner that the bishop gave the canons, and to which Le Maître was always invited, the abbé failed in some formality, adding, at the same time, some harsh words, which the other could not digest. He instantly formed the resolution to quit them the following night; nor could any consideration make him give up his design, though Madame de Warens, whom he went to take leave of, spared no pains to appease him. He could not relinquish the pleasure of leaving his tyrants embarrassed for the Easter feast, at which time he knew they stood in the greatest need of him. He was most concerned about

his music, which he wished to take with him; but this could not easily be accomplished, as it filled a large case, and was very heavy, and could not be carried under the arm.

Mamma did what I should have done in her situation; and, indeed, what I should yet do. After many useless efforts to retain him, seeing he was resolved to depart, whatever might be the event, she formed the resolution to give him every possible assistance. I must confess Le Maître deserved it of her, for he was, if I may use the expression, dedicated to her service, in whatever appertained either to his art or knowledge, and the readiness with which he obliged gave a double value to his complaisance. Thus she only paid back on an essential occasion the many favours he had been conferring on her for some three or four years; though, I should observe, she possessed a soul that, to fulfil such duties, had no occasion to be reminded of previous obligation. Accordingly she ordered me to follow Monsieur le Maître at least as far as Lyons, and continue with him as long as he might have occasion for my services. She has since avowed that a desire of detaching me from Venture had a great hand in this arrangement. She consulted her faithful servant Claude Anet about the conveyance of the above-mentioned case. He advised that, instead of hiring a beast at Annecy, which would infallibly discover us, it would be better at night to take it to some neighbouring village, and there hire an ass to carry it to Seyssel, which, being in the French dominions, we should have nothing to fear. This plan was

adopted; we departed the same night at seven o'clock, and Mamma, under pretence of paying my expenses, increased the purse of the poor 'kitten' by an addition that was very acceptable. Claude Anet, the gardener, and myself carried the case as best we could to the first village, then hired an ass, and the same night reached Seyssel.

I think I have already remarked that there are times in which I am so unlike myself that I might be taken for a man of a directly opposite disposition; I shall now give an example of this. Monsieur Reydelet, curate of Seyssel, was canon of Saint-Pierre, consequently known to Monsieur le Maître, and one of the people from whom he should have taken most pains to conceal himself: my advice, on the contrary, was to present ourselves to him, and, under some pretext, entreat entertainment as if we visited him by consent of the chapter. Le Maître adopted this idea, which seemed to give his revenge an appearance of mockery and satirical merriment; in short, we went boldly to Reydelet, who received us very kindly. Le Maître told him he was going to Bellay by desire of the bishop, that he might superintend the music during the Easter holidays, and that he proposed returning that way in a few days. To support this tale I told a hundred others, so naturally that Monsieur Reydelet thought me a very agreeable youth, and treated me with great friendship and civility. We were well regaled and well lodged: Monsieur Reydelet scarcely knew how to make enough of us; and we parted the best

friends in the world, with a promise to stop longer on our return. We found it difficult to refrain from laughter, or wait till we were alone to give free vent to our mirth. Indeed, even now the bare recollection of it forces a smile, for never was waggery better or more fortunately maintained. This would have made us merry during the remainder of our journey, if Monsieur le Maître, who did not cease drinking and fooling, had not been two or three times attacked with a complaint which was growing upon him, and which resembled epilepsy. These fits threw me into the most fearful embarrassments, from which I resolved to extricate myself at the first opportunity.

According to the information given to Monsieur Reydelet, we passed our Easter holidays at Bellay, and, though not expected there, were received by the music-master and welcomed by every one with great pleasure. Monsieur le Maître was of considerable note in his profession, and indeed merited that distinction. The music-master of Bellay, who was fond of his own works, endeavoured to obtain the approbation of so good a judge; for, besides being a connoisseur, Le Maître was equitable, neither a jealous, ill-natured critic nor a servile flatterer. He was so superior to the generality of country music-masters, and they were so sensible of it, that they treated him rather as their chief than a brother musician.

Having passed four or five days very agreeably at Bellay, we departed, and, continuing our journey without meeting with any accidents

except those I have just spoken of, arrived at Lyons, and were lodged at Notre-Dame de Pitié. While we waited for the arrival of the before-mentioned case (which, by the assistance of another lie, and the care of our good patron Monsieur Reydelet, we had embarked on the Rhône), Monsieur le Maître went to visit his acquaintance, and among others Père Caton, a Cordelier, who will be spoken of hereafter, and the Abbé Dortan, Comte de Lyon, both of whom received him well, but afterwards betrayed him, as will be seen presently; indeed, his good fortune terminated with Monsieur Reydelet.

Two days after our arrival at Lyons, as we traversed a little street not far from our inn, Le Maître was attacked by one of his fits; but it was now so violent as to give me the utmost alarm. I screamed with terror, called for help, and, naming our inn, entreated some one to bear him to it; then, while the people were assembled and busy round a man that had fallen senseless in the street, he was abandoned by the only friend on whom he could have any reasonable dependence. I seized the instant when no one heeded me, turned the corner of the street, and disappeared. Thanks to heaven I have made my third painful confession. If many such remained I should certainly abandon the work I have undertaken.

Of all the incidents I have yet related a few traces are remaining in the places where I then lived; but what I have to relate in the following book is almost entirely unknown: these are the

greatest extravagances of my life, and it is fortunate they had not a worse conclusion. My head, if I may use the simile, screwed up to the pitch of an instrument it did not naturally accord with, had lost its diapason; in time it returned to it again, when I discontinued my follies, or at least gave in to those more consonant to my disposition. This epoch of my youth I am least able to recollect, nothing having passed sufficiently interesting to influence my heart and make me clearly retrace the remembrance. In so many successive changes it is difficult not to make some transpositions of time or place. I write absolutely from memory, without notes or materials to help my recollection. Some events are as fresh in my ideas as if they had recently happened, but there are certain chasms which I cannot fill up but by the aid of descriptions as confused as the remembrance. It is possible, therefore, that for want of due information I may have erred in trifles, and perhaps shall again; but in every matter of importance I can answer that the account is faithfully exact, and with the same veracity the reader may depend I shall be careful to continue it.

My resolution was soon taken after quitting Monsieur le Maître. I set out immediately for Annecy. The cause and mystery of our departure had interested me for the safety of our retreat. This interest, which entirely employed my thoughts for some days, had banished every other idea; but no sooner was I secure and in tranquillity than my predominant sentiment

regained its place. Nothing flattered, nothing tempted me, I had no wish but to return to Mamma; the tenderness and truth of my attachment to her had uprooted from my heart every imaginable project, and all the follies of ambition. I conceived no happiness but living near her, nor could I take a step without feeling that the distance from that happiness was increased. I returned, therefore, as soon as possible, with such speed and with my spirits in such a state of agitation that, though I recall with pleasure all my other travels, I have not the least recollection of this, save my leaving Lyons and reaching Annecy. Let any one judge whether this last event can have slipped my memory, when told that on my arrival I found Madame de Warens was not there: she had set out for Paris!

I was never well informed of the motives of this journey. I am certain she would have told me had I earnestly asked her, but never was man less curious to learn the secrets of his friend. My heart, solely occupied with the present, finds its whole capacity filled therewith, and, save past pleasures, henceforth my only enjoyment, there remains not a vacant corner for things that are no more. All that I conceive from what I heard of it is, that in the revolution caused at Turin by the abdication of the King of Sardinia, she feared being forgotten, and was willing, by favour of the intrigues of Monsieur d'Aubonne, to seek the same advantage in the Court of France, where she has often told me she should have preferred it, as the

multiplicity of business there prevents one's conduct from being so closely inspected. If this was her business, it is astonishing that on her return she was not ill received; be that as it will, she continued to enjoy her allowance without any interruption. Many people imagined she was charged with some secret commission, either by the bishop, who then had business at the Court of France, where he himself was soon after obliged to go, or some one yet more powerful, who knew how to insure her a gracious reception at her return. If this were the case, it is certain the ambassadress was not ill chosen, since, being still young and handsome, she had all the necessary qualifications to succeed in a negotiation.

BOOK IV

[1731-1732]

LET any one judge my surprise and grief at not finding her on my arrival. I now began to feel regret at having abandoned Monsieur le Maître, and my uneasiness increased when I learned the misfortunes that had befallen him. His box of music, containing all his fortune—that precious box, preserved with so much care and fatigue—had been seized at Lyons by means of Comte Dortan, who had received information from the chapter of our having absconded with it. In vain did Le Maître reclaim his property, his means of existence, the labour of his life: his right to the music in question was at least subject to litigation, but even that liberty was not allowed him, the affair being instantly decided by the law of the stronger. Thus poor Le Maître lost the fruit of his talents, the labour of his youth, and the resource of his old age.

Nothing was wanting to render the news I had received truly afflicting, but I was at an age when great calamities can be sustained; accordingly I soon found consolation. I expected shortly to hear news of Madame de

Warens, though I was ignorant of her address, and she knew nothing of my return. As to my desertion of Le Maître, all things considered, I did not find it so very culpable. I had been serviceable to him in his retreat; it was not in my power to give him any further assistance. Had I remained with him in France, it would not have cured his complaint; I could not have saved his music, and should only have doubled his expense. In this point of view I then saw my conduct; I see it otherwise now. A villainous action does not torment us at the instant we commit it, but on recollection, and sometimes even after a number of years have elapsed, for the remembrance is not to be extinguished.

The only means I had to obtain news of Mamma was to remain where I was. Where should I seek her at Paris, or how bear the expense of such a journey? Sooner or later, there was no place where I could be so certain to hear of her as at Annecy; this consideration determined me to remain there, though my conduct was but indifferent. I did not go to the bishop who had already befriended me, and might continue to do so: my patroness was not present, and I feared his reprimands on the subject of our flight. Neither did I go to the seminary; Monsieur Gros was no longer there; in short, I went to none of my acquaintance. I would gladly have visited Madame l'Intendante, but did not dare. I did worse; I sought out Monsieur Venture, whom, notwithstanding my enthusiasm, I had never thought of since

my departure. I found him quite gay, in high spirits, and the universal favourite in Annecy; the ladies besieged him. This success completed my infatuation. I saw nothing but Monsieur Venture; he almost made me forget Madame de Warens. That I might profit more at ease by his instructions and example, I proposed to share his lodging, to which he readily consented. It was at a shoemaker's—a pleasant, jovial fellow, who, in his country dialect, called his wife nothing but *salopière*, an appellation which she certainly merited. Venture took care to augment their differences, though under an appearance of doing the direct contrary, throwing out in a distant manner, and provincial accent, hints that produced the utmost effect, and furnished such scenes as were sufficient to make one die with laughter. Thus the mornings passed without our thinking of them; at two or three o'clock we took some refreshment. Venture then went to his various engagements, where he supped, while I walked alone, meditating on his great merit, coveting and admiring his rare talents, and cursing my own unlucky stars, that did not call me to so happy a life. How little did I then know of myself! Mine had been a hundred times more delightful, had I not been so great a fool, or known better how to enjoy it.

Madame de Warens had taken no one with her but Anet; Merceret, her chambermaid, whom I have before mentioned, still remained in her mistress's rooms. Merceret was something older than myself, not pretty, but tolerably

agreeable; a good-natured Fribourgeoise, free from malice, having no fault to my knowledge but being a little refractory with her mistress. I often went to see her; she was an old acquaintance, who recalled to my remembrance one more beloved, and this made her dear to me. She had several friends, and among others one Mademoiselle Giraud, a Genevese, who, for my sins, took it into her head to have an inclination for me, always pressing Merceret, when she returned her visits, to bring me with her. As I liked Merceret, I felt no disinclination to accompany her; besides, I met there with other young people whose company pleased me. As for Mademoiselle Giraud, who offered every kind of enticement, nothing could increase the aversion I had for her. When she drew near me, with her dried black snout, smeared with Spanish snuff, I could hardly refrain from expectorating, but, being pleased with her visitors, I took patience. Among these were two girls who, to pay their court either to Mademoiselle Giraud or myself, strove to make much of me. I conceived this to be only friendship, but have since thought it depended only on myself to have discovered something more, though I did not even suspect it at the time.

Besides, seamstresses, chambermaids, or milliners never tempted me; I sighed for ladies! Every one has his peculiar taste; this has ever been mine, being in this particular of a different opinion from Horace.[1] Yet it is not vanity of

[1] *Satires*, Book I. 2. See also Montaigne's *Essays*, Book III. ch. 3.

riches or rank that attracts me: it is a well-preserved complexion, fine hands, elegance of ornament, an air of delicacy and neatness throughout the whole person; higher taste in the manner of attiring and expressing themselves, a finer or better-made gown, small feet handsomely shod, ribbons, lace, and well-dressed hair; I even prefer those who have less natural beauty, provided they are elegantly decorated. I freely confess this preference is very ridiculous, yet my heart gives in to it spite of my understanding.

Well, even this advantage presented itself, and it only depended on my own resolution to have seized the opportunity. How do I love, from time to time, to return to those moments of my youth, which were so charmingly delightful; so short, so scarce, and enjoyed at so cheap a rate! how fondly do I wish to dwell on them! Even yet the remembrance of these scenes warms my heart with a chaste rapture, which appears necessary to reanimate my drooping courage and enable me to sustain the weariness of my latter days.

The appearance of Aurora seemed so delightful one morning that, putting on my clothes, I hastened into the country to see the rising of the sun. I enjoyed that pleasure in its utmost extent. It was one week after midsummer; the earth had put on its best array, and was covered with verdure and flowers; the nightingales, whose soft warblings were almost concluded, seemed to vie with each other, and in concert with birds of various kinds to bid adieu to spring,

and hail the approach of a beautiful summer's day—one of those lovely days that are no longer to be enjoyed at my present age, and which have never been seen on the melancholy soil I now inhabit.[1]

I had rambled insensibly to a considerable distance from the town. The heat augmenting, I was walking in the shade along a valley by the side of a brook, when I heard behind me the steps of horses and the voices of some females who, though they seemed embarrassed, did not laugh the less heartily on that account. I turn round, hear myself called by name, and approaching find two young people of my acquaintance, Mademoiselle de Graffenried and Mademoiselle Galley, who, not being very excellent horsewomen, could not make their horses cross the rivulet. Mademoiselle de Graffenried was a young lady of Berne, very amiable, who, having been sent from that country for some youthful folly, had imitated Madame de Warens, at whose house I had sometimes seen her, but not having, like her, a pension, she had gladly attached herself to Mademoiselle Galley, who had prevailed on her mother to engage her young friend as a companion till she could be otherwise provided for. Mademoiselle Galley was one year younger than her friend, prettier, more delicate, more refined, and, to complete all, slender, yet well formed—the most interesting period of girlhood. They loved each other tenderly, and the good disposition of both could not fail to render their union durable, if some

[1] Wootton, in Staffordshire.

lover did not derange it. They informed me they were going to Toune, an old château belonging to Madame Galley, and implored my assistance to make their horses cross the stream, not being able to compass it themselves. I would have given each a cut or two with the whip, but they feared I might be kicked and themselves thrown. I therefore had recourse to another expedient. I took hold of Mademoiselle Galley's horse and led him through the brook, the water reaching half-way up my legs. The other followed without any difficulty. This done, I would have paid my compliments to the ladies, and walked off like a great booby as I was, but after whispering each other, Mademoiselle de Graffenried said, 'No, no; you must not think to escape us thus; you have got wet in our service, and we must in conscience see that you are properly dried. If you please, you must go with us; you are now our prisoner.' My heart began to beat. I looked at Mademoiselle Galley. 'Yes, yes,' added she, laughing at my fearful look, 'our prisoner of war; come, get up behind her; we shall give a good account of you.' 'But, mademoiselle,' continued I, 'I have not the honour to be acquainted with your mother; what will she say on my arrival?' 'Her mother,' replied Mademoiselle de Graffenried, 'is not at Toune. We are alone; we shall return at night, and you shall come back with us.'

The stroke of electricity has not a more instantaneous effect than these words produced on me. Leaping up behind Mademoiselle de

Graffenried, I trembled with joy, and when it became necessary to clasp her in order to hold myself on, my heart beat so violently that she perceived it, and told me hers beat also from a fear of falling. In my present posture this was almost an invitation to verify her assertion, yet I did not dare; and during the whole way my arms served as a girdle—a very close one, I must confess—without being for a moment displaced. Some women who read this would be for giving me a box on the ear, and, truly, I deserved it.

The gaiety of the journey and the chat of those girls so enlivened me that, during the whole time we passed together, we never ceased talking for a moment. They had set me so thoroughly at ease that my tongue spoke as fast as my eyes, though not exactly the same things. Some minutes, indeed, when I was left alone with either, the conversation became a little embarrassed, but neither of them was absent long enough to allow time for explaining the cause.

Arrived at Toune, and myself well dried, we breakfasted together, after which it was necessary to settle the important business of preparing dinner. The young ladies cooked, kissing from time to time the farmer's children, while the poor scullion looked on with vexation. Provisions had been sent for from town, and there was everything necessary for a good dinner, but unhappily they had forgotten wine. This forgetfulness was by no means astonishing in girls who seldom drank any, but I was sorry for the

omission, as I had reckoned on its help, thinking it might add to my confidence. They were sorry likewise, and perhaps from the same motive; though I have no reason to say this, for their lively and charming gaiety was innocence itself; besides, there were two of them—what could they expect from me? They sent everywhere about the neighbourhood to seek for wine, but none could be procured, so poor and sober are the peasants in those parts. As they were expressing their concern, I begged them not to give themselves any uneasiness on my account, for while with them I had no occasion for wine to intoxicate me. This was the only gallantry I ventured at during the whole of the day, and I believe the sly rogues saw well enough that I said nothing but the truth.

We dined in the farm kitchen. The two friends were seated on the benches, one on each side the long table, and their guest at the end, between them, on a three-legged stool. What a dinner! how charming the remembrance! While we can enjoy, at so small an expense, such pure, such true delights, why should we be solicitous for others? Never did supper at one of the *petites maisons* of Paris equal this; I do not only say for real pleasure and gaiety, but even for sensuality.

After dinner we were economical; instead of drinking the coffee we had reserved at breakfast, we kept it for an afternoon collation, with cream and some cakes which they had brought with them, and to keep our appetites in play we went into the orchard, meaning to finish our dessert

with cherries. I got into a tree, throwing them down bunches, from which they returned the stones through the branches. Once Mademoiselle Galley, holding out her apron and drawing back her head, stood so fair, and I took such good aim, that I dropped a bunch into her bosom. On her laughing, I said to myself, 'Why are not my lips cherries? how gladly would I throw them there likewise!'

Thus the day passed with the greatest freedom, yet with the utmost decency; not a single equivocal word, not one attempt at double-meaning pleasantry; yet this delicacy was not affected, we only performed the parts our hearts dictated; in short, my modesty, some will say my folly, was such that the greatest familiarity that escaped me was once kissing the hand of Mademoiselle Galley. It is true, the attending circumstances helped to stamp a value on this trifling favour: we were alone, I was embarrassed, her eyes were fixed on the ground, and my lips, instead of uttering words, were pressed to her hand, which she drew gently back after the salute, without any appearance of displeasure. I know not what I should have said to her; her friend entered, and at that moment seemed ugly.

At length they bethought themselves that they must return to town before night; even now we had but just time to reach it by daylight, and we hastened our departure in the same order as we came. Had I pleased myself, I should certainly have reversed this order, for the glance of Mademoiselle Galley had reached

my heart; but I dared not mention it, and the proposal could not reasonably come from her. On the way we expressed our sorrow that the day was over; but far from complaining of the shortness of its duration, we were conscious of having prolonged it by every possible amusement.

I quitted them almost at the very spot where they had taken me up. With what regret did we part! With what pleasure did we form projects to renew our meeting! A dozen hours thus passed together were worth ages of familiarity. The sweet remembrance of this day cost those amiable girls nothing; the tender union which reigned among us equalled more lively pleasures, with which it could not have co-existed. We loved each other without shame or mystery, and thus we wished to continue our affection. There is a species of enjoyment connected with innocence of manners which is superior to any other, because it has no interval or interruption; for myself, the remembrance of such a day touches me nearer, delights me more, and returns with greater rapture to my heart, than any other pleasures I ever tasted. I hardly know what my own feelings were respecting those charming girls. I do not say that, had the arrangement been in my power, I should have divided my heart between them; I felt some degree of preference. I should have been happy to have Mademoiselle de Graffenried for a mistress; yet I think, by choice, I should have liked her better as a confidant. Be that as it may, I felt on leaving them as though I

could not live without either. Who would have thought that I should never see them more, and that here must end our ephemeral amours?

Those who read this will not fail to laugh at my gallantries, and remark, that after very promising preliminaries, my utmost advances concluded by a kiss of the hand. Yet be not mistaken, reader: I have, perhaps, tasted more real pleasure in my amours which concluded by a kiss of the hand, than you will ever have in yours, which, at the very least, begin there.

Venture, who had gone to bed late the night before, came in soon after me. I did not now see him with my usual satisfaction, and took care not to inform him how I had passed the day. The ladies had spoken of him slightingly, and appeared discontented at finding me in such bad hands. This hurt him in my esteem; besides, whatever diverted my ideas from them was at this time disagreeable. However, he soon brought me back to myself by speaking of the situation of my affairs, which was too critical to last; for, though I spent very little, my slender finances were almost exhausted. I was without resource; no news of Mamma; I knew not what would become of me, and felt a cruel pang at heart to see the friend of Mademoiselle Galley reduced to beggary.

Venture informed me that he had spoken of me to Monsieur le Juge-mage, and would take me next day to dine with him; that he was a man who by means of his friends might render me essential service. In other respects he was a desirable acquaintance, being a man of wit and

letters, of agreeable conversation, one who possessed talents and loved them in others. Then, mingling, as was his wont, the most serious concerns with the most trifling frivolity, he showed me a pretty couplet, which had come from Paris, on an air in one of Mouret's operas, which was then being played. Monsieur Simon, the Jugemage, was so pleased with this couplet that he desired to make another in answer to it on the same air. He had asked Venture to write another, and the latter would have me to make a third, that, as he expressed it, they might see couplets start up next day like the *brancards* in the *Roman Comique*.[1]

In the night, not being able to sleep, I composed a couplet, my first essay in poetry. It was passable; better, or at least composed with more taste, than it would have been the preceding night, the subject turning upon a very tender incident, to which my heart was now entirely disposed. In the morning I showed my performance to Venture, who, being pleased with the couplet, put it in his pocket, without informing me whether he had made his. We dined with Monsieur Simon, who treated us very politely. The conversation was agreeable; indeed, it could not be otherwise between two men of natural intelligence, improved by reading. For me, I acted my proper part, which was to listen in silence. Neither of them mentioned the couplet; neither did I, nor do I know that mine was ever alluded to.

Monsieur Simon appeared satisfied with my

[1] Part I. chap. ix.

behaviour; indeed, it was almost all that he saw of me in this interview. We had often met at Madame de Warens', but he had never paid much attention to me. It is from this dinner, therefore, that I date our acquaintance, which, though of no service in regard to the object I then had in view, was afterwards productive of advantages which make me recollect it with pleasure.

I should be wrong not to give some account of his person, since, from his office of magistrate, and the reputation of wit on which he piqued himself, no idea could otherwise be formed of it. Monsieur le Juge-mage Simon was certainly not three feet high; his legs, spare, straight, and tolerably long, would have added something to his stature had they been vertical, but they stood in the direction of an open pair of compasses. His body was not only short, but thin, being in every respect of most inconceivable smallness—when naked he must have appeared like a grasshopper. His head was of the common size, to which appertained a well-formed face, a noble look, and tolerably fine eyes; in short, it appeared a borrowed head, stuck on a miserable stump. He might very well have dispensed with dress, for his large wig alone covered him from head to foot.

He had two voices, perfectly different, which intermingled perpetually in his conversation, forming at first a diverting, but afterwards a very disagreeable, contrast. One, grave and sonorous, was, if I may hazard the expression, the voice of his head; the other, clear, sharp,

and piercing, the voice of his body. When he paid particular attention, and spoke leisurely, so as to control his breath, he could continue his deep tone; but if he were the least animated, or attempted a lively accent, his voice sounded like the whistling of a key, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could return to the bass.

With the figure I have just described, and which is by no means caricatured, Monsieur Simon was gallant, ever entertaining the ladies with soft tales, and carrying the decoration of his person even to foppery. Willing to make use of every advantage, he often, during the morning, gave audience in bed; for, when a handsome head was discovered on the pillow, no one could have imagined that there was little else. This circumstance gave birth to scenes which I am certain are yet remembered by all Annecy.

One morning, when he expected to give audience in bed, or rather on the bed, wearing a handsome night-cap ornamented with two large knots of rose-coloured ribbon, a countryman arriving knocked at the door. The maid happened to be out; Monsieur le Juge-mage, therefore, hearing the knock repeated, cried, 'Come in,' and as he spoke rather loud, it was in his acute tone. The man entered, looked about, endeavouring to discover whence the female voice proceeded, and at length, seeing a handsome head-dress set off with ribbons, was about to leave the room, making the supposed lady a hundred apologies. Monsieur Simon, in a rage, screamed the more shrilly; and the

countryman, confirmed in his opinion, and conceiving himself to be insulted, began railing in his turn, saying that apparently she was nothing better than a common street-walker, and that Monsieur le Juge-mage should be ashamed of setting such ill examples. The enraged magistrate having no other weapon than the chamber-vessel, was just going to throw it at the poor fellow's head as his servant returned.

This dwarf, ill-used by nature as to his person, was recompensed by possessing an understanding naturally agreeable, which he had been careful to cultivate. Though he was esteemed a good lawyer, he did not like his profession, delighting more in the finer parts of literature, which he studied with success; above all, he had caught thence that superficial brilliancy, the art of pleasing in conversation, even with the ladies. He knew by heart all the little witticisms of the 'Ana,' and others of the like kind, which he well knew how to make the most of, relating with an air of secrecy, and as an anecdote of yesterday, what had happened sixty years before. He understood music, and could sing agreeably in his masculine voice; in short, for a magistrate, he had many pleasing talents. By flattering the ladies of Annecy, he became fashionable among them; he appeared like a little monkey in their train. He even pretended to favours, at which they were much amused. One Madame d'Epagny used to say that the utmost favour he could aspire to was to kiss a lady's knee.

As he was well read, and spoke fluently on

literature, his conversation was both amusing and instructive. When I afterwards took a taste for study, I cultivated his acquaintance, and found my account in it. When at Chambéri, I sometimes went from thence to see him. His praise increased my emulation, to which he added some good advice respecting the prosecution of my studies, which I found useful. Unhappily, this weakly body contained a very feeling soul. Some years after, he was chagrined by I know not what unlucky affair, but it cost him his life. This was really unfortunate, for he was a good little man, whom at first acquaintance one laughed at, but afterwards loved. Though our situations in life were very little allied with each other, yet, as I received some useful lessons from him, I thought gratitude demanded that I should dedicate a few sentences to his memory.

As soon as I found myself at liberty, I ran into the street where Mademoiselle Galley lived, flattering myself that I should see some one go in or out, or at least open a window; but I was mistaken—not even a cat appeared, the house remaining as close all the time as if it had been uninhabited. The street was small and lonely; any one loitering there was likely to be noticed; and from time to time people of the neighbourhood passed in and out. I was much embarrassed, thinking my person might be known, and the cause that brought me there conjectured; this idea tortured me, for I have ever preferred the honour and happiness of those I love to my own pleasures.

At length, weary of playing the Spanish lover, and having no guitar, I determined to write to Mademoiselle de Graffenried. I should have preferred writing to her friend, but did not dare to take that liberty, as it appeared more proper to begin with her to whom I owed the acquaintance, and with whom I was more familiar. Having written my letter, I took it to Mademoiselle Giraud, as the young ladies had agreed at parting, they having furnished me with this expedient. Mademoiselle Giraud was a quilter, and sometimes worked at Madame Galley's, which procured her free admission to the house. I must confess I was not thoroughly satisfied with this choice of a messenger, but was cautious of starting difficulties, fearing that if I objected to her no other might be named, and it was impossible to intimate that she had an inclination toward me herself. I even felt humiliated that she should think that I could imagine her to be of the same sex as those young ladies; in a word, I accepted her agency rather than none, and availed myself of it at all events.

At the very first word, La Giraud discovered me. I must own that this was not a difficult matter, for, if sending a letter to young girls had not spoken for itself, my foolish embarrassed air would have betrayed me. It will easily be supposed that the employment gave her little satisfaction; she undertook it, however, and performed it faithfully. The next morning I ran to her house, and found an answer ready for me. How did I hurry away that I might have an opportunity to read and kiss it alone!

though this need not be told, but the plan adopted by Mademoiselle Giraud, and in which I found more delicacy and moderation than I had expected, should. She had sense enough to conclude, that her thirty-seven years, hare's eyes, bedaubed nose, shrill voice, and blackish skin stood no chance against two elegant young girls, in all the height and bloom of beauty; she resolved, therefore, neither to betray nor assist them, choosing rather to lose me entirely than to entertain me for them.

[1732.] As La Merceret had not heard from her mistress for some time, she thought of returning to Fribourg, and the persuasions of La Giraud determined her; nay, more, she intimated that it was proper that some one should conduct her to her father's, and proposed me. As I happened to be agreeable to little Merceret, she approved the idea, and the same day they mentioned it to me as a settled affair. Finding nothing displeasing in this way of disposing of me, I consented, thinking it could not be above a week's journey at most; but La Giraud, who had arranged the whole affair, thought otherwise. It was necessary to avow the state of my finances; provision was made accordingly, La Merceret undertaking to defray my expenses; but, to retrench on one hand what was expended on the other, I advised that her little baggage should be sent on before, and that we should proceed by easy journeys on foot. So the matter was concluded.

I am sorry to have so many girls in love with

me; but, as there is nothing to be very vain of in the success of these amours, I think I may tell the truth without scruple. La Merceret, younger and less artful than La Giraud, never made me so many advances, but she imitated my manners, my accents, repeated my words, and showed me all those little attentions that I ought to have paid to her. Being very timorous, she took great care that we should both sleep in the same chamber, a circumstance that usually produces some consequences between a lad of twenty and a girl of twenty-five.

For once, however, it went no further; my simplicity being such that, though La Merceret was by no means a disagreeable girl, not the smallest temptation or even idea of gallantry ever entered my head, and even if it had, I was too great a novice to have profited by it. I could not imagine how two young persons could bring themselves to sleep together, thinking that such familiarity must require ages of preparation. If poor Merceret paid my expenses in hopes of any equivalent, she was sadly cheated, for we arrived at Fribourg exactly as we had quitted Annecy.

I passed through Geneva without visiting any one, but while going over the bridges I found myself deeply affected. Never could I see the walls of that fortunate city, never could I enter it, without feeling my heart sink from excess of tenderness. At the same time that the image of liberty elevated my soul, the ideas of equality, union, and gentleness of manners touched me even to tears, and inspired me with a lively regret

at having forfeited all these advantages. What an error was I in—but yet how natural! I imagined I saw all this in my native country, because I bore it in my heart.

It was necessary to pass through Nyon: could I do this without seeing my good father? Had I resolved on doing so, I must afterwards have died with regret. I left La Merceret at the inn, and ventured to his house. How wrong was I to fear him! On seeing me, his soul gave way to the parental tenderness with which it was filled. What tears were mingled with our embraces! He thought I was returned to him. I related my history, and informed him of my resolution. He opposed it feebly, mentioning the dangers to which I exposed myself, and telling me the shortest follies were the best, but did not attempt to keep me by force, in which particular I think he acted rightly; but it is certain he did not do everything in his power to retain me, even by fair means,—whether, after the step I had taken, he thought I ought not to return, or was puzzled at my age to know what to do with me. I have since found that he conceived—though not unnaturally—a very unjust opinion of my travelling companion. My stepmother, a good woman, rather smooth-tongued, put on an appearance of wishing me to stay for supper. I did not, however, comply, but told them I proposed remaining longer with them on my return, leaving as a deposit my little packet, that had come by water, and would have been an incumbrance had I taken it with me. I

continued my journey the next morning, well satisfied that I had seen my father, and had taken courage to do my duty.

We arrived without any accident at Fribourg. Towards the conclusion of the journey the politeness of Mademoiselle Merceret slightly diminished, and after our arrival she treated me even with coldness. Her father, who was certainly not in opulent circumstances, did not show me much attention, and I was obliged to lodge at a cabaret. I went to see them the next morning, and received an invitation to dine there, which I accepted. We separated without tears at night; I returned to my paltry lodging, and departed the second day after my arrival, almost without knowing whither to go.

This was again a circumstance of my life in which Providence offered me precisely what was necessary to make my days pass happily. La Merceret was a good girl, neither witty nor handsome, but yet not ugly; not very lively, but tolerably rational, except while under the influence of some little humours, which evaporated in tears, without any violent outbreak of temper. She had a real inclination for me; I might have married her without difficulty, and followed her father's business. My taste for music would have made me love her; I should have settled at Fribourg, a small town, not pretty, but inhabited by very worthy people. I should certainly have missed great pleasures, but should have lived in peace to my last hour, and I must be allowed to know best what I should have gained by such a step.

I did not return to Nyon, but to Lausanne, wishing to gratify myself with a view of that beautiful lake, which is seen there in its utmost extent. The greater part of my secret motives for decision have had no more solid grounds. Distant expectation has rarely strength enough to influence my actions, the uncertainty of the future ever making me regard projects whose execution requires a length of time as deceitful lures. I lend myself to visionary scenes of hope as readily as others, provided they cost me nothing; but, if attended with any prolonged trouble, I have done with them. The smallest, the most trifling, pleasure that is conveniently within my reach tempts me more than all the joys of paradise. I must except, however, those pleasures which are necessarily followed by pain. I only love those enjoyments which are unadulterated, which can never be the case where we are conscious that we are inviting an after-repentance.

It was necessary that I should arrive at some resting-place, and the nearest was best, for, having lost my way on the road, I found myself in the evening at Moudon, where I spent all that remained of my little stock except ten kreutzers, which served to purchase my next day's dinner. Arriving in the evening at a little village near Lausanne, I went into a cabaret, without a sou in my pocket to pay for my lodging, or knowing what would become of me. I found myself extremely hungry. Setting, therefore, a good face on the matter, I ordered supper as boldly as if I had had the means to

pay for it, went to bed without thought, and slept with great composure. In the morning, having breakfasted and reckoned with my host, I offered to leave my waistcoat in pledge for seven batz, which was the amount of my expenses. The honest man refused this, saying that, thank Heaven, he had never stripped any one, and would not now begin for seven batz; adding that I should keep my waistcoat and pay him when I could. I was affected with this unexpected kindness, but felt it less than I ought, or than I have since felt on the remembrance of it. I did not fail to send him his money, with thanks, by one I could depend upon. Fifteen years after, passing through Lausanne, on my return from Italy, I felt a sensible regret at having forgotten the name both of the landlord and the house. I wished to see him, and should have felt real pleasure in recalling to his memory that worthy action. Services doubtless much more important, but rendered with ostentation, have not appeared to me so worthy of gratitude as the simple, unaffected humanity of this honest man.

As I approached Lausanne, I thought of my distress, and the means of extricating myself, without letting my stepmother perceive that I was in want. I compared myself, in this walking pilgrimage, to my friend Venture on his arrival at Annecy, and was so warmed with the idea that, without recollecting that I had neither his polished manners nor his talents, I determined to act at Lausanne the part of a little Venture — to teach music, which I did not

understand, and to say I came from Paris, where I had never been. In consequence of this noble project, as there was no establishment where I could obtain a minor post, and not choosing, indeed, to venture among professional people, I inquired for some little inn, where one could lodge comfortably and cheaply, and was directed to one Perrotet, who took in boarders. This Perrotet, who was one of the best men in the world, received me very kindly, and after having heard my feigned story, promised to speak of me, and endeavour to procure me scholars, saying he should not expect any money till I had earned it. His charge for board (five écus blancs), though moderate in itself, was a great deal to me; he advised me, therefore, to begin with half-board, which consisted of good soup only for dinner, but a plentiful supper at night. I closed with this proposition, and poor Perrotet trusted me with great cheerfulness, sparing meantime no trouble in order to be useful to me.

Having found so many good people in my youth, why do I find so few in my age? Is their race extinct? No; but I do not seek them in the same situation as formerly, among the commonalty, where, violent passions predominating only at intervals, Nature speaks her genuine sentiments. In more elevated stations they are entirely smothered, and under the mask of sentiment, only interest or vanity is heard.

Having written to my father from Lausanne, he sent my packet and some excellent advice, of which I should have profited better. I have already observed that I have moments of incon-

ceivable delirium, in which I am entirely out of myself. I am about to relate one of the most remarkable of these. To comprehend how completely my brain was turned, and to what degree I had 'Venturised' myself, if I may be allowed the expression, the many extravagances I ran into at the same time should be considered. Behold me, then, a singing-master, without knowing how to read the notation of a common song; for, if the five or six months passed with Le Maître had improved me, they could not be supposed sufficient to qualify me; besides, being taught by a master was enough to make me learn ill. Being a Parisian from Geneva, and a Catholic in a Protestant country, I thought I should change my name with my religion and country, still approaching as near as possible to the great model I had in view. He had called himself Venture de Villeneuve. I changed by anagram the name Rousseau into that of Vaussore, calling myself Vaussore de Villeneuve. Venture was a good composer, though he had not said so; I, without knowing anything of the art, boasted of my skill to every one, and, without ability to set down the notes of a petty vaudeville, pretended to be a composer. This was not all: being presented to Monsieur de Treytorens, professor of law, who loved music, and who gave concerts at his house, nothing would do but I must give him a proof of my talents; and accordingly I set about composing a piece for his concerts as boldly as if I had understood the science. I had the constancy to work for a fortnight at this curious business, to copy it fair,

write out the different parts, and distribute them with as much assurance as if it had been a masterpiece of harmony; in short—what will hardly be believed, though strictly true—I tacked to the end of it a very pretty minuet that was commonly played about the streets, and which many may remember from these words, so well known at that time:—

Quel caprice!
Quelle injustice!
Quoi! ta Clarice
Trahirait tes feux! etc.

Venture had taught me this air with the bass, set to other words of a lewd nature, by the help of which I had retained it: thus, at the end of my composition, I put this minuet and the bass, suppressing the words, and uttering it for my own as confidently as if I had been speaking to the inhabitants of the moon.

They assemble to perform my piece: I explain to each the movement, style of execution, and reference to his part—I was fully occupied. They were five or six minutes preparing, which were for me so many ages; at length, everything being ready, I take up a fine roll of paper with which I strike on the leader's desk the five or six strokes signifying 'Attention!' All are silent; I set myself gravely to the work of beating time; they begin. No, never since French operas existed was there such a charivari! Whatever some might have thought of my pretensions to musical talent, the effect was far worse than could have been expected. The

musicians tried to stifle their laughter; the auditors opened wide their eyes and would fain have closed their ears—but this was not possible. My brutal symphonists, who desired a little sport, scraped away with a din that might have split the ears of a *quinze-vingt*. I had the courage to continue, sweating profusely, it is true, yet restrained by shame, and not daring to flee and throw up my chance. For my consolation, I heard around me the company whispering in each other's ear, or rather in mine, 'This is insupportable!' another says, 'What outrageous music!' another, 'What a devilish caterwauling!' Poor Jean-Jacques, in this cruel moment you had no great hopes that there might come a day when, before the King of France and his whole Court, your tunes would excite whispers of surprise and applause, and that in every box around you the most amiable women would murmur softly, 'What delightful sounds! what enchanting music! These strains reach the very heart!'

The minuet, however, presently put all the company in good-humour; hardly was it begun before I heard bursts of laughter from all parts, every one congratulating me on my pretty taste in music, declaring this minuet would make me spoken of, and that I merited the loudest praise. It is not necessary to describe my uneasiness, or to own how much I deserved it.

Next day, one of the musicians, named Lutold, came to see me, and was kind enough not to congratulate me on my success. The profound conviction of my folly, shame, regret,

and the state of despair to which I was reduced, with the impossibility of concealing the cruel agitation of my heart, made me open it to him: suffering, therefore, my tears to flow freely, not content with owning my ignorance, I told all, conjuring him to secrecy; he kept his word, as every one may suppose. The same evening all Lausanne knew who I was, but, what is more remarkable, no one seemed to know, not even the good Perrotet, who, notwithstanding what had happened, continued to lodge and board me.

I led a melancholy life here; the consequences of such an essay had not rendered Lausanne a very agreeable residence. Scholars did not present themselves in crowds, not a single female, and no person of the city. I had only two or three big Germans, as stupid as I was ignorant, who fatigued me to death, and in my hands did not become very fine artists. At length I was sent for to a house, where a little serpent of a girl amused herself by showing me a parcel of music of which I could not read a note, and which she had the malice to sing before her master, to teach him how it should be executed; for I was so little able to read an air at first sight that in the charming concert I have just described I could not possibly follow the execution for a moment, or know whether they played truly what lay before me, and I myself had composed.

In the midst of so many humiliating circumstances, I had the pleasing consolation, from time to time, of receiving letters from my two charming friends. I have ever found the

utmost consolatory virtue in the fair sex; when in disgrace, nothing softens my affliction more than to be sensible that an amiable woman is interested for me. This correspondence ceased, however, soon after, and was never renewed: indeed, it was my own fault, for in changing situations I neglected sending my address, and, forced by necessity to think perpetually of myself, I soon forgot them.

It is a long time since I mentioned poor Mamma, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that I had forgotten her too; never was she a moment absent from my thoughts. I anxiously wished to find her, not merely because she was necessary to my subsistence, but because she was infinitely more necessary to my heart. My attachment to her, though lively and tender, as it really was, did not prevent my loving others, but then it was not in the same manner. All equally claimed my tenderness for their charms; but it was those charms alone I loved, my passion would not have survived them; while Mamma might have become old or ugly without my loving her the less tenderly. My heart had entirely transmitted to herself the homage it first paid to her beauty, and whatever change she might experience, while she remained herself my sentiments could not change. I was sensible how much gratitude I owed to her, but in truth I never thought of it, and whether she served me or not, it would ever have been the same thing. I loved her neither from duty, interest, nor convenience; I loved her because I was born to love her. During my attachment

to another, I own this affection was in some measure deranged; I did not think so frequently of her, yet still with the same pleasure; and never, in love or otherwise, did I think of her without feeling that I could expect no true happiness in life while separated from her.

Though in so long a time I had received no news from her, I never imagined I had entirely lost her, or that she could have forgotten me. I said to myself, She will know sooner or later that I am wandering about, and will let me know that she is living: I am certain I shall find her. In the meantime, it was a pleasure to live in her native country, to walk in the streets where she had walked, and before the houses that she had lived in; yet all this was the work of conjecture, for one of my foolish peculiarities was not daring to inquire after her, or even pronounce her name without the most absolute necessity. It seemed in speaking of her that I declared all I felt, that my lips revealed the secrets of my heart, and in some degree compromised her. I believe fear was likewise mingled with this idea; I dreaded to hear ill of her. The step she had taken had been much spoken of, and something of her conduct in other respects; fearing, therefore, that aught might be said which I did not wish to hear, I preferred to hear nothing.

As my scholars did not take up much of my time, and the town where she was born was not above four leagues from Lausanne, I made it a walk of two or three days, during which time a most pleasant emotion never left me. A view of

the Lake of Geneva and its admirable shore had ever, in my idea, a particular attraction which I cannot describe—not arising merely from the beauty of the prospect, but something else, I know not what, more interesting, which affects and softens me. Every time I approach the Vaudois country I experience an impression composed of the remembrance of Madame de Warens, who was born there; of my father, who lived there; of Mademoiselle de Vulson, who was my first love, and of several pleasant journeys I made there in my childhood, mingled with some nameless charm, more powerfully attractive than all the rest. When that ardent desire for a life of happiness and tranquillity, which ever flees from me, and for which I was born, inflames my mind, 'tis ever to the country of Vaud, near the lake, in those charming plains, that imagination leads me. An orchard on the banks of that lake, and no other, is absolutely necessary; a firm friend, an amiable woman, a cow, and a little boat; nor could I enjoy perfect happiness on earth without all these. I laugh at the simplicity with which I have several times gone into that country for the sole purpose of seeking this imaginary happiness. I was ever surprised to find the inhabitants, particularly the women, of a disposition quite different from what I sought. How contradictory did this appear to me! The country and the people who inhabit it were never, in my idea, formed for each other.

Walking along these beautiful banks, on my way to Vévay, I gave myself up to the softest

melancholy: my heart rushed with ardour into a thousand innocent felicities; melting to tenderness, I sighed and wept like a child. How often, stopping to weep more at my ease, and seated on a large stone, did I amuse myself with seeing my tears drop into the water!

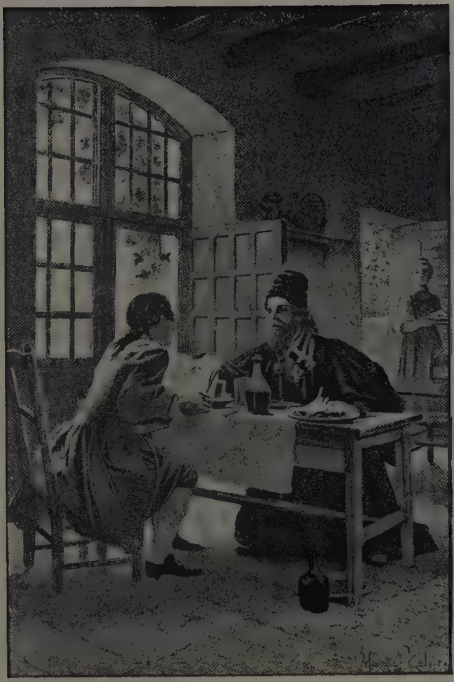
On my arrival at Vévay I lodged at the Clef, and during the two days I remained there, without any acquaintance, conceived a love for that town, which has followed me through all my travels, and was finally the cause that I placed in this spot the residence of the hero and heroines of my romance. I would say to any one who has taste and feeling, Go to Vévay, visit the surrounding country, examine the prospects, go on the lake, and then say whether nature has not designed this country for a Julie, a Claire, and a Saint-Preux; but do not seek them there. I now return to my story.

Being a Catholic, and avowing myself to be one, I followed without mystery or scruple the religion I had embraced. On Sunday, if the weather was fine, I went to hear mass at Assens, a place two leagues distant from Lausanne, and generally in company with other Catholics, particularly a Parisian embroiderer, whose name I have forgotten. Not such a Parisian as myself, but a Parisian of Paris, an arch-Parisian from his Maker, yet good-natured as a Champenois. He loved his country so well that he would not doubt my being his countryman, for fear he should not have so much occasion to speak of it. The Lieutenant-

baillival, Monsieur de Crouzas, had a gardener, who was likewise from Paris, but not so complaisant; he thought the glory of his country concerned when any one claimed that honour who was not really entitled to it. He put questions to me, therefore, with an air and tone as if certain to detect me in a falsehood, and once, smiling malignantly, asked me what was remarkable in the Marché-Neuf. It may be supposed I evaded the question; but I have since passed twenty years at Paris, and certainly should know that city; yet, were the same question repeated at this day, I should be equally embarrassed to answer it, and from this embarrassment it might be concluded I had never been there: thus, even when we meet with truths, we are subject to build our opinions on false principles.

I formed no ideas, while at Lausanne, that were worth recollecting, nor can I say exactly how long I remained there; I only know that, not finding sufficient to subsist on, I went from thence to Neufchâtel, where I passed the winter. Here I succeeded better: I got some scholars, and saved enough to pay my good friend Perrotet, who had faithfully sent my baggage, though at that time I was considerably in his debt.

By continuing to teach music I insensibly gained some knowledge of it. The life I led was sufficiently agreeable, and any reasonable man might have been satisfied, but my unsettled heart demanded something more. On Sundays, or whenever I had leisure, I wandered, sighing



THE ARCHIMANDRITE

and thoughtful, about the adjoining fields and woods, and when once out of the city, never returned before night. One day being at Boudry, I went to dine at a cabaret, where I saw a man with a long beard, dressed in a violet-coloured Greek habit, with a fur cap, and whose air and manner were rather noble. This person found some difficulty in making himself understood, speaking only an unintelligible jargon, which bore more resemblance to Italian than any other language. I understood almost all he said, and I was the only person present who could do so, for he was obliged to make his requests known to the landlord and others about him by signs. On my speaking a few words in Italian, which he perfectly understood, he got up and embraced me with rapture; a connection was soon formed, and from that moment I became his interpreter. His dinner was excellent, mine rather worse than indifferent; he gave me an invitation to dine with him, which I accepted without much ceremony. Drinking and chatting soon rendered us familiar, and by the end of the repast we had become inseparable. He informed me that he was a Greek prelate, and Archimandrite of Jerusalem; that he had undertaken to collect funds in Europe for the repairing of the Holy Sepulchre, and showed me some very fine patents from the Czarina, the Emperor, and several other sovereigns. He was tolerably content with what he had collected hitherto, though he had experienced inconceivable difficulties in Germany; for, not understanding a word of German,

Latin, or French, he had been obliged to have recourse to his Greek, Turkish, and Lingua Franca, which did not procure him much in the country he was travelling through; his proposal, therefore, to me was that I should accompany him in the quality of secretary and interpreter. In spite of my violet-coloured coat, which accorded well enough with the proposed employment, he guessed from my ill-furnished appearance that I should easily be gained; and he was not mistaken. The bargain was soon made; I demanded nothing, and he promised liberally. Without security, without bond, without acquaintance, I give myself up to his guidance, and next morning behold me on my way to Jerusalem.

We began our expedition rather unsuccessfully by the canton of Fribourg. Episcopal dignity would not suffer him to play the beggar, or solicit help from private individuals; but we presented his commission to the Senate, who gave him a trifling sum. From thence we went to Berne, where we lodged at the Faucon, then a good inn, and frequented by respectable company, the public table being well supplied and numerously attended. I had fared indifferently so long that I was glad to make myself amends, therefore took care to profit by the present occasion. Monseigneur l'Archimandrite was himself an excellent companion, loved good cheer, was gay, spoke well for those who understood him, and knew perfectly well how to make the most of his Greek erudition. One day, at dessert, while cracking nuts, he cut his

finger pretty deeply, and as it bled freely showed it to the company, saying with a laugh, 'Mirate, signori; questo è sangue Pelasgo.'

At Berne I was not useless to him, nor was my performance so bad as I had feared; I certainly spoke better and with more confidence than I could have done for myself. Matters were not conducted here with the same simplicity as at Fribourg; long and frequent conferences were necessary with the chiefs of the State, and the examination of his titles was not the work of a day; at length, everything being adjusted, he was admitted to an audience by the Senate: I entered with him as interpreter, and was ordered to speak. Nothing was further from my expectation, for it never entered my mind that, after such long and frequent conferences with the members, it was necessary to address the assembly collectively, as if nothing had been said. Judge my embarrassment!—a man so bashful, to speak, not only in public, but before the Senate of Berne! to speak impromptu, without a single moment for recollection; it was enough to annihilate me. I was not even intimidated. I described succinctly and clearly the commission of the Archimandrite; extolled the piety of those princes who had contributed, and, to heighten that of their excellencies by emulation, added that less could not be expected from their well-known munificence; then, endeavouring to prove that this good work was equally interesting to all Christians, without distinction of sect, I concluded by promising the benediction of Heaven to all those who took

part in it. I will not say that my discourse was the cause of our success, but it was certainly well received; and, on our quitting, the Archimandrite was gratified by a considerable present, to which were added some very handsome compliments on the intelligence of his secretary; these I had the agreeable office of interpreting, but could not take courage to render literally. This was the only time in my life that I spoke in public, and before a sovereign; and the only time, perhaps, that I spoke boldly and well. What difference in the disposition of the same person! Three years ago, having been to see my old friend, Monsieur Roguin, at Yverdun, I received a deputation to thank me for some books I had presented to the library of that city. The Swiss are great speakers; these gentlemen, accordingly, made me a long harangue, which I thought myself obliged to answer, but so embarrassed myself in the attempt that my head became confused, I stopped short, and was laughed at. Though naturally timid, I have sometimes acted with confidence in my youth, but never in my advanced age: the more I have seen of the world, the less I have been able to adopt its manners.

On leaving Berne we went to Soleure; the Archimandrite designing to re-enter Germany, and return through Hungary or Poland to his own country. This would have been a prodigious tour; but as the contents of his purse rather increased than diminished during his journey, he was in no haste to return. For me, who was almost as much pleased on horse-

back as on foot, I would have desired no better fate than to travel thus during my whole life; but it was pre-ordained that my journey should be shorter.

The first thing we did after our arrival at Soleure was to pay our respects to the French Ambassador there. Unfortunately for my Bishop, this chanced to be the Marquis de Bonac, who had been Ambassador at the Porte, and consequently was acquainted with every particular relative to the Holy Sepulchre. The Archimandrite had an audience that lasted about a quarter of an hour, to which I was not admitted, as the Ambassador understood the Lingua Franca, and spoke Italian at least as well as myself. On my Greek's departure I prepared to follow him, but was detained. It was now my turn. Having called myself a Parisian, as such I was under the jurisdiction of his excellency: he therefore asked me who I was, exhorting me to tell the truth. This I promised to do, but entreated a private audience, which was immediately granted. The Ambassador took me to his closet, and shut the door; there, throwing myself at his feet, I kept my word; nor should I have said less had I promised nothing, for a continual wish to unbosom myself puts my heart perpetually upon my lips. After having disclosed myself without reserve to the musician Lutold, I was not disposed to act the mysterious with the Marquis de Bonac, who was so well pleased with my little history, and the ingenuousness with which I had related it, that he led me by the hand to the Ambassadress, and pre-

sented me, with an abridgment of my recital. Madame de Bonac received me kindly, saying that I must not be suffered to follow that Greek monk. It was accordingly resolved that I should remain at their hotel till they saw what could be done for me. I wished to bid adieu to my poor Archimandrite, for whom I had conceived an attachment, but was not permitted. They sent him word that I was to be detained there, and in a quarter of an hour after I saw my little bundle arrive. Monsieur de La Martinière, secretary to the embassy, had in a manner the care of me. While following him to the chamber assigned to my use, he said, 'This apartment was occupied under the Comte du Luc by a celebrated man of the same name as yourself; it is for you to succeed him in every respect, and cause it to be said hereafter, "Rousseau the First, Rousseau the Second."' This similarity, which I did not then expect, would have been less flattering to my wishes could I have foreseen at what price I should one day purchase the distinction.

What Monsieur de La Martinière had said excited my curiosity; I read the works of the person whose chamber I occupied, and on the strength of the compliment that had been paid me—imagining I had a taste for poetry—made my first essay in a cantata in praise of Madame de Bonac. This inclination was not permanent, though from time to time I have composed indifferent verses. I think it is a good exercise to teach elegant turns of expression, and to improve a prose style, but could never find

attractions enough in French poetry to give myself wholly to it.

Monsieur de La Martinière wished to see my style, and asked me to write the detail I had before made to the Ambassador; accordingly I wrote him a long letter, which I have since been informed was preserved by Monsieur de Marianne, who had been long attached to the Marquis de Bonac, and has since succeeded Monsieur de La Martinière as secretary to the embassy of Monsieur de Courteilles. I have begged Monsieur de Malesherbes to endeavour to procure me a copy of this letter. If I get it, by him or others, it will be found in the collection which I intend shall accompany my Confessions.

The experience I began to acquire tended to moderate my romantic projects: for example, not only did I not fall in love with Madame de Bonac, but also felt I did not stand much chance of succeeding in the service of her husband. Monsieur de La Martinière in office, and Monsieur de Marianne in expectancy, my utmost hopes could only aspire to the office of under-secretary, which did not infinitely tempt me. This was the reason that, when consulted on the situation I should like to be placed in, I expressed a great desire to go to Paris. The Ambassador readily gave in to the idea, which at least tended to disembarrass him of me. Monsieur de Merveilleux, interpreting secretary to the embassy, said that his friend Monsieur Godard, a Swiss colonel in the service of France, wanted a person to be with his nephew, who

had entered the service very young, and he supposed that I would suit him. On this idea, so lightly formed, my departure was determined; and I, who saw a journey to perform, with Paris at the end of it, was enraptured at the project. They gave me several letters, a hundred francs to defray the expenses of my journey, accompanied with some good advice, and I started.

I was a fortnight making the journey, which I may reckon among the happiest days of my life. I was young, in perfect health, with plenty of money, and the most brilliant hopes; added to this, I was on foot, and alone. It would appear strange that I should mention the latter circumstance as advantageous, if my peculiarity of temper were not already familiar to the reader. I was continually occupied with pleasing chimeras, and never did the warmth of my imagination produce more magnificent ones. When offered an empty place in a carriage, or any person accosted me on the road, how vexed was I to see that fortune overthrown whose edifice I had erected while walking! For once, my ideas were all martial: I was going to live with a military man; nay, to become one, for it was concluded I should begin with being a cadet. I already fancied myself in regimentals, with a fine white plume, and my heart was inflamed by this noble idea. I had some smattering of geometry and fortification; my uncle was an engineer; I was, in a manner, a soldier by inheritance. My short sight, indeed, presented some little obstacle, but did not by

any means discourage me, as I reckoned to supply that defect by coolness and intrepidity. I had read, too, that Marshal Schomberg was remarkably short-sighted, and why might not Marshal Rousseau be the same? My imagination was so warmed by these follies that it presented nothing but troops, ramparts, gabions, batteries, and myself in the midst of fire and smoke, an eye-glass in hand, tranquilly giving orders. Notwithstanding, when the country presented a delightful prospect, when I saw groves and rivulets, the pleasing sight made me sigh with regret, and feel, in the midst of all this glory, that my heart was not formed for such disorder and strife; and soon, without knowing how, I found myself among my dear sheepfolds, renouncing for ever the labours of Mars.

How much did the first sight of Paris disappoint the idea I had formed of it! The exterior decorations I had seen at Turin, the beauty of the streets, the symmetry and regularity of the houses, had led me to expect in Paris something more. I had figured to myself a splendid city, beautiful as large, of the most commanding aspect, whose streets were ranges of magnificent palaces, composed of marble and gold. On entering the Faubourg Saint-Marceau I saw nothing but dirty, stinking streets, filthy black houses, an air of slovenliness and poverty, beggars, carters, and botchers, criers of *tisane* and old hats. This struck me so forcibly that all I have since seen of real magnificence in Paris could never erase this first

impression, which has ever given me a secret disgust to residing in that capital; and I may say, the whole time I remained there afterwards was employed in seeking resources which might enable me to live at a distance from it. This is the consequence of a too lively imagination, which exaggerates even beyond the voice of fame, and ever expects more than is told. I had heard Paris so flatteringly described that I pictured it like the ancient Babylon, which perhaps had I seen I might have found equally below the image I had formed in my mind. The same thing happened at the Opera House, to which I hastened the day after my arrival. I was sensible of the same deficiency at Versailles, and some time after on viewing the sea; and the same consequence will always happen to me in viewing objects which I have heard highly extolled; for it is impossible for man, and difficult for nature herself, to surpass the wealth of my imagination.

By the reception I met with from all those to whom my letters were addressed, I thought my fortune was certainly made. The person who received me the least kindly was Monsieur de Surbeck, to whom I had the warmest recommendation. He had retired from the service, and lived philosophically at Bagneux, where I waited on him several times without his offering me even a glass of water. I was better received by Madame de Merveilleux, sister-in-law to the interpreter, and by his nephew, who was an officer in the Gardes. The mother and son not only received me kindly, but offered me the

use of their table, which favour I frequently accepted during my stay at Paris. Madame de Merveilleux appeared to have been handsome; her hair was of a fine black, which, according to the old mode, she wore curled on the temples. She still retained—what do not perish with a set of features—the beauties of an amiable mind. She appeared satisfied with mine, and did all she could to render me service; but no one seconded her endeavours, and I was presently undeceived in the great interest they had seemed to take in my affairs. I must, however, do the French nation the justice to say that they do not exhaust themselves in protestations, as some have represented, and those that they make are usually sincere; but they have a manner of appearing interested in your affairs, which is more deceiving than words. The gross compliments of the Swiss can only impose upon fools; the manners of the French are more seducing, for the reason that they are more simple. You are persuaded they do not express all they mean to do for you, in order that you may be all the more agreeably surprised. I will say more: they are not false in their demonstrations, being naturally zealous to oblige, humane, benevolent, and even, whatever may be said to the contrary, more sincere than any other nation; but they are too flighty. They feel truly the sentiment they profess for you, but that sentiment flies off as quickly as it came. In speaking to you, their whole attention is fixed on you alone; when absent, you are forgotten. Nothing is permanent

in their hearts; all is the work of the moment.

Thus I was greatly flattered, but received little service. Colonel Godard, for whose nephew I was recommended, proved to be an avaricious old wretch, who, on seeing my distress, though he was immensely rich, wished to have my services for nothing, meaning to place me with his nephew rather as a valet without wages than a tutor. He represented that as I was to be continually engaged with him I should be excused from duty, and might live on my cadet's allowance—that is to say, on the pay of a soldier; hardly would he consent to give me a uniform, thinking the clothing of the army might serve. Madame de Merveilleux, provoked at his proposals, persuaded me not to accept them; her son was of the same opinion; something else was to be thought on, but no situation was procured. Meantime I began to be straitened; for the hundred francs with which I had commenced my journey could not last much longer. Happily, I received a small remittance from the Ambassador, which was very serviceable, nor do I think he would have abandoned me had I possessed more patience; but languishing, waiting, soliciting, are to me impossible. I was disheartened, I ceased to make calls, and all was over. I had not forgotten my poor Mamma, but how was I to find her? Where should I seek her? Madame de Merveilleux, who knew my story, assisted me in the search, but for a long time unavailingly; at length she informed

me that Madame de Warens had set out on her return above two months before, but it was not known whether for Savoy or Turin, and that some conjectured she had gone to Switzerland. Nothing further was necessary to fix my determination to follow her, certain that, wherever she might be, I stood more chance of finding her in the country than at Paris.

Before my departure I exercised my new poetical talent in an epistle to Colonel Godard, whom I ridiculed to the utmost of my abilities. I showed this scribble to Madame de Merveilleux, who, instead of discouraging me, as she ought to have done, laughed heartily at my sarcasms, as well as her son, who, I believe, did not like Monsieur Godard; indeed, it must be confessed he was not a loveable man. I was tempted to send him my verses, and they encouraged me in it; accordingly I made them up in a parcel directed to him, and there being no local post then at Paris, I put it in my pocket, and sent it to him from Auxerre, as I passed through that place. I laugh even yet, sometimes, at the grimaces he must have made on reading this panegyric, where he was certainly drawn to the life. It began thus:

> Tu croyais, vieux penard, qu'une folle manie
> D'élever ton neveu m'inspirerait l'envie.

This little piece, which, it is true, was but indifferently written, did not want for salt, and announced a turn for satire; it is, notwithstanding, the only satirical writing that ever came from my pen. I have too little hatred in my

heart to take advantage of such a talent; but I believe it may be judged from some polemical pieces, which from time to time I have put forth in my own defence, that, had I been of a vindictive disposition, my adversaries would rarely have had the laughter on their side.

What I most regret is not having kept a journal of my travels, being conscious that a number of interesting details have slipped my memory; for never did I exist so completely, never live so thoroughly, never was so much myself, if I may so speak, as in those journeys made alone and on foot. Walking animates and enlivens my spirits; I can hardly think when in a state of inactivity; my body must be exercised to make my judgment active. The view of a fine country, a succession of agreeable prospects, a free air, a good appetite, and the health I gain by walking; the freedom of inns, and the distance from everything that can make me recollect the dependence of my situation, conspire to free my soul, and give boldness to my thoughts, throwing me, in a manner, into the immensity of beings, where I combine, choose, and appropriate them to my fancy, without constraint or fear. I dispose of all nature as I please; my heart, wandering from object to object, approximates and unites with those that please it, is surrounded by charming images, and becomes intoxicated with delicious sensations. If, attempting to render these permanent, I amuse myself in forming a mental picture, what boldness of outline, what glow of colouring, what energy of expression, do I give them! It has been said that all these are to be

found in my works, though written in the decline of life. Oh! had those of my early youth been seen, those made during my travels, composed, but never written! Why did I not write them? will be asked. And why should I have written them? I may answer. Why deprive myself of the actual charm of my enjoyments to tell others what I enjoyed? What to me were readers, the public, or all the world, while I was mounting the empyrean? Besides, did I carry pens, paper, and ink with me? Had I made such provision, not a thought would have occurred worth preserving. I do not foresee when I shall have ideas; they come when they please, and not when I call for them; either they avoid me altogether, or, rushing in crowds, overwhelm me with their force and number. Ten volumes a day would not have sufficed; how then should I find time to write them? In stopping, I thought of nothing but a hearty dinner; on departing, of nothing but a charming walk; I felt that a new paradise awaited me at the door, and to attain it was my sole object.

Never did I experience this so feelingly as in the return journey I am now describing. In coming to Paris, I had confined myself to ideas concerning the situation I expected to occupy there. I had rushed into the career I was about to run, and had made a pretty glorious progress, but it was not that that my heart adhered to. Some real beings obscured my imagined ones. Colonel Godard and his nephew could not keep pace with a hero of my disposition. Thank

Heaven, I was now delivered from all these obstacles, and could enter at pleasure into the wilderness of chimeras, for that alone remained before me, and I wandered in it so completely that I several times lost my way; but this was no misfortune. I would not have shortened it; for, feeling with regret, as I approached Lyons, that I must again return to the material world, I should have been glad never to have arrived there.

One day, among others, having purposely gone out of my way to take a nearer view of a spot that appeared delightful, I was so charmed with it, and wandered round it so often, that at length I completely lost myself, and after several hours' useless walking, weary, fainting with hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's hut, which had not indeed a promising appearance, but was the only one I could discover near me. I thought it was here as at Geneva or in Switzerland, where the inhabitants, living at ease, have it in their power to exercise hospitality. I entreated the countryman to give me some dinner, offering to pay for it. He presented me with some skimmed milk and coarse barley bread, saying it was all he had. I drank the milk with pleasure, and ate the bread, chaff and all; but it was not very restorative to a man sinking with fatigue. The countryman, who watched me narrowly, judged the truth of my story by my appetite. Presently after—having said that he plainly saw[1] I was an honest,

[1] Apparently my face at that period did not much resemble my portraits taken in later life.—R.

good-natured young man, and did not come to betray him—he opened a little trap-door by the side of his kitchen, went down, and returned a moment after with a good brown loaf of pure wheat, the remains of a good but rather highly flavoured ham, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest. He then prepared a good thick omelet, and I made such a dinner as none but a walking traveller ever enjoyed. When I again offered to pay, his inquietude and fears returned. He not only would have no money, but refused it with the most evident emotion; and what made this scene more amusing, I could not imagine the motive of his fear. At length he pronounced tremblingly those terrible words, 'commissioners' and 'cellar-rats,' which he explained by giving me to understand that he concealed his wine because of the excise, and his bread on account of the tax imposed on it; adding he should be an undone man if it were suspected he was not almost perishing with want. What he said to me on this subject, of which I had not the smallest idea, made an impression on my mind that can never be effaced, sowing seeds of that inextinguishable hatred which has since grown up in my heart against the vexations these unhappy people suffer, and against their oppressors. This man, though in easy circumstances, dared not eat the bread gained by the sweat of his brow, and could only escape ruin by exhibiting an outward appearance of misery! I left his cottage with as much indignation as concern, deploring the fate of those beautiful countries,

where Nature has been prodigal of her gifts, only that they may become the prey of barbarous exactors.

The incident which I have just related is the only one of which I have a distinct remembrance during this journey. I recollect, indeed, that on approaching Lyons I wished to prolong it by going to see the banks of the Lignon; for, among the romances I had read with my father, *L'Astrée* was not forgotten, and recurred more frequently to my thoughts than any other. Stopping for some refreshment, while chatting with my hostess I inquired the way to Forez, and was informed that that country was an excellent place for mechanics, as there were many forges, and much ironwork done there. This eulogium instantly calmed my romantic curiosity, for I felt no inclination to seek Dianas and Sylvanders among a generation of blacksmiths. The good woman who encouraged me with this piece of information certainly thought I was a journeyman locksmith.

I had some view in going to Lyons. On my arrival I went to Les Chasottes to see Mademoiselle du Châtelet, a friend of Madame de Warens, for whom I had brought a letter when I came there with Monsieur Le Maître, so that it was an acquaintance already formed. Mademoiselle du Châtelet informed me that her friend had indeed passed through Lyons, but could not tell whether she had gone on to Piedmont, being uncertain at her departure whether it would not be necessary to stop in Savoy; but, if I chose, she would immediately

write for information, and thought my best plan would be to remain at Lyons till she received it. I accepted this offer, but did not tell Mademoiselle du Châtelet how much I was pressed for an answer, and that my exhausted purse would not permit me to wait long. It was not an appearance of coolness that withheld me; on the contrary, I was very kindly received, treated on the footing of equality, and this took from me the resolution of explaining my circumstances, for I could not bear to descend from a companion to a miserable beggar.

I seem to have retained a very complete remembrance of the successive events contained in this book, yet I think I remember, about the same period, another journey to Lyons, which I cannot place in its due order, where I found myself much straitened. A little anecdote, that presents some difficulty in the relation, will not suffer me to forget it. One evening I sat at Bellecour after a slight supper, meditating on my difficulties and prospects, when a man wearing a cotton bonnet seated himself by my side. He seemed to be one of those silkworkers called at Lyons *taffetatiers*. He spoke to me; I replied in a friendly way. We had not been conversing for more than quarter of an hour, when, with perfect coolness of voice and manner, he proposed that we should take some amusement together. I was so scared by the impudence of his succeeding remarks that, without replying, I hastily arose and ran away at full speed, thinking the wretch must be close at my heels. So strongly was I agitated that, instead

of proceeding to my lodging by the Rue Saint-Dominique, I ran along the quay, and did not stop till past the wooden bridge, trembling all the while like a criminal. I was subject to the same vice; the recollection of this affair cured me of it for a long period.

In my present journey I met with a somewhat similar adventure, which, however, was attended with greater danger. Conscious that my resources were fast diminishing, I tried to make the small remainder go as far as possible. I ate fewer meals at the inn, and soon quite ceased to frequent the table; and, instead of spending there some five-and-twenty sous, went to a tavern, where I could satisfy my appetite as fully for five or six. Ceasing to take my food at the inn, I knew not how, with a good grace, to go thither to sleep—not that I owed my hostess much, but was ashamed, as a profitless guest, to occupy a room. The weather was fine; one very warm evening I resolved to spend the night in the public square, and had already taken my place upon a bench, when an abbé, who in passing had noticed me, approached and asked whether I was homeless. I told him how matters stood with me, and he seemed affected. He sat down beside me, and we conversed. He spoke agreeably; from all that he said I conceived a wonderfully good opinion of him. When he saw me disposed in his favour, he told me that his lodging was not very roomy; that he had but a single chamber, but that he really could not suffer me to sleep where I was; that it was too late to seek another bed, and

that he would offer me half of his own for the night. I accepted his offer, thinking that I had fallen in with one who might prove a useful friend. We soon arrived, and he struck a light. His chamber, though small, appeared to be very neat, and he played the host politely. We each ate a couple of brandied cherries, which he took from a glass jar, and retired to rest.

This man's tastes resembled those of my Jew at the asylum for converts, but his manner was less brutal. Gently, and with as much firmness as I could command, I spoke to him in a fashion that brought him to a better state of mind, and the night passed tranquilly. Indeed, he made many excellent and sensible observations, and did not lack merit of a sort, though assuredly he was a very vile fellow.

In the morning, Monsieur l'Abbé, who would fain put a fair face on the matter, talked of breakfast, and asked one of the landlady's daughters, a pretty girl, to serve it. She told him that she could not spare time to do so. He then made the same request to her sister, who did not deign to reply. Still we waited—no appearance of breakfast. At length we went into their apartment, where Monsieur l'Abbé had a very ill welcome, my own reception being even less satisfactory. The elder girl, in turning round, planted her heel on my foot, just where a grievous corn had obliged me to cut the shoe-leather; the other snatched away a chair on which I was about to sit; their mother, in flinging water out of the window, splashed my face; wherever I took up my position I was

bidden to move that they might search for some article. I had never in my life experienced such treatment. In their looks were mingled anger, insult, and covert contempt, which at the time I was too stupid to comprehend. Bewildered, astonished, almost believing them to be mad, a real terror came over me, when the abbé, who feigned neither to see nor to hear, and judged that no breakfast was to be hoped for, determined to leave, and I hastened after him, glad to escape from the three furies. As we went along he proposed that we should breakfast at a café. Hungry though I was, I refused his offer, which, indeed, he did not make in a very pressing fashion, and we parted at the third or fourth street-corner—I delighted to be out of sight of that accursed house, and all that pertained to it; he well pleased, I imagine, that he had led me so far from it that I could not easily find it again. Since neither at Paris nor in any other town have I ever encountered a parallel to these two adventures, there was left in my mind a most unfavourable impression of the natives of Lyons—a city which I regard as more hideously corrupt than any other in Europe.

The recollection of the extremities to which I was reduced does not contribute to recall the idea agreeably. Had I been like many others, had I possessed the talent of borrowing and running in debt at every cabaret, I might have fared better; but in that my incapacity equalled my repugnance, and, to demonstrate the prevalence of both, it will be sufficient to say that,

though I have passed almost my whole life in indifferent circumstances, and frequently on the point of wanting bread, I was never once asked for money by a creditor without having it in my power to pay it instantly. I could never bear to contract clamorous debts, and have ever preferred suffering to owing.

Being reduced to pass my nights in the streets may certainly be called suffering, and this was several times the case at Lyons, having preferred to buy bread with the few pence I had remaining to bestowing them on lodgings, as I was convinced there was less danger of dying for want of sleep than of hunger. What is astonishing, while in this unhappy situation, I took no care for the future, was neither uneasy nor melancholy, but patiently waited an answer to Mademoiselle du Châtelet's letter, and, lying in the open air, stretched on the earth, or on a bench, slept as soundly as if reposing on a bed of roses. I remember, particularly, to have passed a most delightful night outside the city, on a road which had the Rhône, or Saône—I cannot recollect which—on the one side, and a range of terraced gardens on the other. It had been a very hot day, the evening was delightful, the dew moistened the withering grass, no wind was stirring, the air was fresh without chilliness, the setting sun had tinged the clouds with a beautiful crimson, which was again reflected by the water, and the trees that bordered the terrace were filled with nightingales, who were continually answering each other's songs. I walked along in a kind of ecstasy, giving up my heart

and senses to the enjoyment of so many delights, and sighing only from a regret of enjoying them alone. Absorbed in this pleasing reverie, I lengthened my walk till it grew very late, without perceiving that I was tired; at length, however, I discovered it, and threw myself on the step of a kind of niche, or false door, in a terrace wall. How charming was the couch! The trees formed a stately canopy, a nightingale sat directly over me, and with his soft notes lulled me to rest. How sweet my repose—my awaking more so! It was broad day; on opening my eyes I saw the water, the verdure, an admirable landscape. I arose, shook off the remains of drowsiness, and, finding I was hungry, gaily retook the way to the city, resolving to spend the two pieces of six blancs I had yet remaining in a good breakfast. I found myself so cheerful that I went all the way singing. I even remember that I sang a cantata of Batistin's called 'Les Bains de Thomery,' which I knew by heart. May a blessing light on the good Batistin and his good cantata, which procured me a better breakfast than I had expected, and a still better dinner, which I did not expect at all! In the midst of my singing I heard some one behind me, and, turning round, perceived an Antonine,[1] who followed after and seemed to listen with pleasure to my song. At length, accosting me, he asked whether I understood music. I answered, 'A little,' but in a manner to have it understood that I knew a great deal, and, as he continued

[1] One of a community of secularised monks.

questioning of me, I related a part of my story. He asked me if I had ever copied music. I replied, 'Often,' which was true, for I had learned most by copying. 'Well,' continued he, 'come with me, I can employ you for a few days, during which time you shall want for nothing, provided you consent not to quit my room.' I acquiesced very willingly, and followed him.

This Antonine was called Monsieur Rolichon; he loved music, understood it, and sang in some little concerts with his friends. Thus far all was innocent and right, but apparently this taste had become a furore, part of which he was obliged to conceal. He conducted me into a small chamber, where I found a great quantity of music; he gave me some to copy, particularly the cantata he had heard me singing, and which he was shortly to sing himself. I remained here three or four days, copying all the time I did not eat, for never in my life was I so hungry, or better fed. He brought my provisions himself from the kitchen, and it appeared that these people lived well—at least, if every one fared as I did. In my life I never took such pleasure in eating, and it must be owned this good cheer came very opportunely, for my purse was almost exhausted. I worked nearly as heartily as I ate, which is saying a great deal; 'tis true I was not as correct as diligent, for some days after, meeting Monsieur Rolichon in the street, he informed me there were so many omissions, repetitions, and transpositions in the parts I had copied that they could not be performed. It

must be owned that, in choosing subsequently the profession of music, I hit on that which I was least calculated for; yet my voice was good, and I copied neatly; but the fatigue of long work bewilders me so much that I spend more time in altering and scratching out than in pricking down, and, if I do not employ the strictest attention in comparing the several parts, they are sure to fail in the execution. Thus, through endeavouring to do well, my performance was very faulty; for, aiming at expedition, I did all amiss. This did not prevent Monsieur Rolichon from treating me well to the last, and giving me an écu at my departure, which I certainly did not deserve, and which completely set me up, for a few days after I received news from Mamma, who was at Chambéri, with money to defray my expenses of the journey to her, which I performed with rapture. Since then my finances have frequently been very low, but never at such an ebb as to reduce me to fasting, and I note this period with a heart fully alive to the bounty of Providence, as the last in my life in which I sustained poverty and hunger.

I remained at Lyons seven or eight days longer, to wait for some little commissions with which Mamma had charged Mademoiselle du Châtelet, whom, during this interval, I visited more assiduously than before, having the pleasure of talking with her of her friend, and being no longer disturbed by the cruel thought of my situation, or endeavours to conceal it. Mademoiselle du Châtelet was neither young nor

handsome, but did not want for elegance; she was easy and obliging, while her understanding lent a grace to her familiarity. She had a taste for that kind of moral observation which leads to the knowledge of mankind, and from her originated the taste for that study in myself. She was fond of Le Sage's novels, particularly *Gil Blas*, which she lent me, and recommended to my perusal. I read it with pleasure, but my judgment was not yet ripe enough for that species of reading. I liked romances which dealt with high-flown sentiments. Thus did I pass my time in visiting Mademoiselle du Châtelet, with as much profit as pleasure. It is certain that the interesting and sensible conversation of a meritorious woman is more proper to form the understanding of a young man than all the pedantic philosophy of books. I became acquainted at Les Chasottes with some other boarders and their friends, and, among the rest, with a young person of fourteen, called Mademoiselle Serre, whom I did not much notice at that time, though I was deeply in love with her eight or nine years afterwards, and with great reason, for she was a charming girl.

Fully occupied with the idea of seeing Mamma, I gave some respite to my chimeras, for, finding happiness in real objects, I was the less inclined to seek it in visions. I had not only found her, but also by her means, and near her, an agreeable situation, for she sent me word that she had procured one that would suit me, and which would not oblige me to quit her. I exhausted all my conjectures in guessing

what this occupation could be, but I must have possessed the art of divination to have hit on the truth. I had money sufficient to make my journey agreeable. Mademoiselle du Châtelet would have persuaded me to hire a horse, but this I could not consent to, and I was certainly right; by so doing I should have lost the pleasure of the last pedestrian expedition I ever made; for I cannot give that name to those excursions I have frequently taken about my own neighbourhood when living at Motiers.

It is very singular that my imagination never rises so high as when my situation is least agreeable or cheerful. When everything smiles around me, then I am least amused; my erratic brain cannot confine itself to realities, cannot embellish, but must create. Real objects but strike me as they really are; my imagination can only adorn ideal ones. If I would paint the spring, it must be in winter; if describe a beautiful landscape, it must be while surrounded with walls; and I have said a hundred times that were I confined to the Bastille, I could draw the picture of liberty. On my departure from Lyons, I saw nothing but an agreeable future; the content I now with reason enjoyed was as great as my discontent had been at leaving Paris, notwithstanding I had not during this journey any of those delightful reveries I then enjoyed. My mind was serene, and that was all. I was drawing near the excellent friend I was again to see, my heart overflowing with tenderness, enjoying in advance, but without intoxication, the pleasure of living near her: I

had always expected this, and it was as if nothing new had happened. I was anxious about the nature of my future employment, as if that alone had been material. My ideas were calm and peaceable, not ravishing and celestial; every object struck my sight in its natural form; I observed the surrounding landscape, marked the trees, the houses, the rivulets, deliberated on the cross-roads, was fearful of losing myself, yet did not do so. In a word, I was no longer in the empyrean, but precisely where I found myself, or sometimes, perhaps, at the end of my journey—never further.

I am, in recounting my travels, as I was in making them, loath to arrive at the conclusion. My heart beat with joy as I approached my dear Mamma, but I went no faster on that account. I love to walk at my ease, and stop at leisure; a strolling life is necessary to me. Travelling on foot, in a fine country, with fine weather, with no need for haste, and with the expectation of an agreeable conclusion to my journey, is the manner of living of all others most suited to my taste. It is already understood what I mean by a fine country; never could a flat one, though ever so beautiful, appear such in my eyes. I must have torrents, fir-trees, black woods, mountains to climb or descend, and rugged roads with precipices on either side to alarm me. I experienced this pleasure in all its charm as I approached Chambéri, not far from a mountain which is called Pas de l'Echelle. Beneath the main road, which is hewn through the rock, at a place known as Chailles, a small river

runs and rushes into fearful chasms, which it appears to have been millions of ages in hollowing out. The road has been hedged by a parapet to prevent accidents, which enabled me to contemplate the whole descent, and become dizzy at pleasure; for what is singularly amusing in my taste for these steep rocks is that they cause a swimming in my head, for which I have a fondness, provided I am in safety. Leaning, therefore, over the parapet, I remained whole hours, catching, from time to time, a glance of the froth and blue water, whose rushing caught my ear, mingled with the cries of ravens and other birds of prey that flew from rock to rock, and bush to bush, at six hundred feet below me. In places where the slope was tolerably regular, and clear enough from bushes to let stones roll freely, I went a considerable way to gather some so large that I could but just carry them, which I piled on the parapet, and then threw down one after the other, being transported at seeing them roll, rebound, and fly into a thousand pieces, before they reached the bottom of the precipice.

Near Chambéri I enjoyed an equally pleasing spectacle, though of a different kind, the road passing near the foot of the most charming cascade I ever saw. The water, which is very rapid, shoots from the top of an excessively steep mountain, falling at such a distance from its base that it is possible to walk between the cascade and the rock without any inconvenience; but if not particularly careful it is easy to be deceived, as I was, for the water, falling from

such an immense height, separates and descends in a rain as fine as dust, and, on approaching too near this cloud, without perceiving it, you may be wet through in an instant.

At length I arrive—I behold her. She was not alone, Monsieur l'Intendant-Général was with her. Without speaking a word to me, she caught my hand, and, presenting me to him with that natural grace which charmed all hearts, said, 'This, sir, is the poor young man I mentioned; deign to protect him as long as he deserves it, and I shall feel no concern for the remainder of his life.' Then added, addressing herself to me, 'Child, you now belong to the King; thank Monsieur l'Intendant, who supplies you with the means of existence.' I stared without answering, without knowing what to think of all this; rising ambition almost turned my head; I was already prepared to act the Intendant myself. My fortune, however, was not so brilliant as it appeared at the first blush, but it was sufficient to maintain me, which, as I was situated, was a capital acquisition. I shall now explain the nature of my employment.

King Victor Amadeus, judging by the event of the preceding wars, and the situation of the ancient patrimony of his fathers, that he should not long be able to maintain it, wished to drain it beforehand. Having resolved, therefore, to tax the nobility, he had ordered a general survey of the whole country, in order that the rate might be more equally assessed. This scheme, which was begun under the father, was com-

pleted by the son; two or three hundred men, part surveyors, who were called geometricians, and part writers, who were called secretaries, were employed in this work; among those of the latter description Mamma had got me appointed. This post, without being very lucrative, furnished the means of living comfortably in that country; the misfortune was, this employment could not be of any great duration, but it put me in train to seek for something better, as by this means she hoped to insure the particular protection of the Intendant, who might find me some more settled occupation when this was concluded.

I entered on my new employment a few days after my arrival, and, as there was no great difficulty in the business, soon mastered it; thus, after four or. five years of unsettled life, folly, and suffering, since my departure from Geneva, I began, for the first time, to gain my bread with credit.

These long details of my early youth must have appeared puerile, and I am sorry for it: though born a man, in a variety of instances I was long a child, and am so yet in many particulars. I did not promise the public a great personage. I promised to describe myself as I am; and, to know me in my advanced age, it is necessary to know what I was in my youth. As, in general, objects that are present make less impression on me than the bare remembrance of them, my ideas being all from recollection, the first traits which were engraven on my mind have distinctly remained: those

which have since been imprinted there have rather combined with the former than effaced them. There is a certain yet varied succession of affections and ideas, which continue to modify those that follow them, and this progression must be known, in order to judge rightly of those they have influenced. I have studied to develop the first causes, the better to show the concatenation of effects. I would desire by some means to render my soul transparent to the eyes of the reader, and for this purpose endeavour to show it in every possible point of view, to give him every insight, and act in such a manner that not a motion should escape him, as by this means he may form a judgment of the principles that produce them.

Were I to take upon myself to decide, and say to the reader, 'Such is my character,' he might think that, if I did not endeavour to deceive him, I at least deceived myself; but in recounting simply all that has happened to me, all my actions, thoughts, and feelings, I cannot lead him into an error, unless I do it wilfully, which by this means I could not easily effect, since it is his province to compare the elements, and judge of the being they compose: thus the result must be his work, and if he is then deceived, the error will be his own. It is not sufficient for this purpose that my recitals should be merely faithful, they must also be exact; it is not for me to judge of the importance of facts, I ought to declare them simply as they are, and leave the estimate that is to be formed of them to him. I have adhered to this principle

hitherto, with the most scrupulous exactitude, and shall not depart from it in the continuation; but the impressions of age are always less vivid than those of youth. I began by delineating the latter, as best I could: should I recollect the rest with the same precision, the reader may, perhaps, become weary and impatient, but I shall not be dissatisfied with my labour. I have but one thing to apprehend in this undertaking: I do not dread saying too much, or advancing falsities, but am fearful of not saying enough, or concealing truths.

END OF VOL. I.

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